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MOSCOW;

OR,

TRIUMPHANT SELF-DEVOTION:

A Poem,

IN THREE CANTOS,

WITH NOTES,

HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND CRITICAL.

BY

THE REV. JAMES HOLME.

"Merses profundo clarior evenit."

HORACE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

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1813.

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Epistle Dedicatory

TO

MR. SERJEANT BEST, M. P.

DEAR SIR,

THE approbation which you were pleased to express of my former productions, and also of so much of the present, as has been submitted to your perusal and censure, fills me with confidence, that I did not overrate my own talents, when I thought myself capable of producing something, not unworthy to meet the eye of the public. It is not an easy thing for a man to form a right estimate of his own literary powers. Self-sufficiency

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in one, and self-distrust in another, are the causes, why the press so frequently teems with abortions, which never merited to see the light;—and why (on the other hand) many an able performance is kept back, which well deserved a better fate.

If the work, which I have now the honor to dedicate to you, can be allowed any claim to rank among the second class, to yourself, in a great measure, is due the credit of calling it into being. It is true, the subject was suggested to me by another friend; and the work was undertaken at his request. What I mean to allege, in respect to yourself, is,—that, before I heard your favorable opinion of my talents, I had almost begun to distrust my own powers, and to make up my mind to obscurity, and silence, for the future,—as one not meriting an audience of the public;—So little notice (as far as I

could learn) had been taken of those performances, which I had already made public, and so studiously (as I have now *been able to ascertain) had they been denied their share of publicity.*

Your flattering attention once more reconciled me to myself; and I determined to make another effort to catch the public ear.

The honorable distinction of your name, prefixed to my little work, will, I doubt not, procure for it better success. Let this plead but half so successfully for it, before the tribunal of the many-headed *judge, as your unrivalled eloquence so often pleads, before an English Jury, and I shall no longer have any fears (let Reviews*

and Newspapers be as mum as they please) but my performances will gain attention.

Accept, dear Sir, my warmest thanks for your friendly attention, and believe me,

Your much devoted,

Very obedient servant,

JAMES HOLME.

Prefatory Address

TO

THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER!

THE work which is here laid before thee, was a hasty production, as all works, undertaken at the spur of the moment, and to catch the interest of transient events, must needs be.—It claims no higher distinction, than such productions, as Dryden's *Annus Mirablis*, and Addison's *Campaign*;—and with these, the Author flatters himself, it need not very much fear a comparison. Perhaps the Reviewers (if these sages deign to notice it) may think differently. Let them. The Author will still enjoy his own opinion.

He professes to be a man of some courage;—determined to write what books he pleases;—and in what style he pleases. And though he does not pretend to be insensible to praise, he scruples not to aver, that he is very indifferent about *their* censure. Perhaps they may think the production too contemptible for their *dignifying* notice. Or, perhaps, some other motive (best known to themselves) may influence them to withhold their criticism. Neither does the Author care much about this. For either he is very much self-deluded,—quite blinded by an overweening self-sufficiency,—or it is not in vain he flatters himself, that his writings will some day gain celebrity, without the aid of their notice;—favorable or unfavorable. Nor shall the mere circumstance of their declining to mention his works, lest *they* should be the instruments of procuring them publicity, ever deter him from his favorite pursuits;—nor yet make him fearful, that they will be lost in oblivion. But, nevertheless, he takes the liberty to ask (as such an opportunity presents

itself, and as it is not going out of his way to do it)—he takes the liberty to ask "these sage dispensers of poetic fame," how they are able to reconcile it with a sense of public duty, to pass over any works which are fairly before the public? A literary periodical Review, to answer the expectations which every one founds upon the title, should exhibit a faithful view of whatever additions are made to the stores of literature, within the respective periods of time to which it relates. If it fall short in this respect, it is fallacious; and disappoints reasonable expectation. It abuses the confidence of the public, and leaves them only half-informed, where the information ought to have been, at any rate, complete, as to its extent. They talk largely enough about *we*, and our readers, and what we owe to the public. The Author could wish them to recollect, that their most important duty to the public is, to apprize them of all the new publications that have appeared during the space of time to which their pamphlet refers;—to present a concise

view of their substance, topics, and arrangement.—And lastly, if they please, they may discuss their respective merits, either in regard to the material or composition.

Every work is fairly before the public, which has at all been advertised in any one of the London papers.—For if it have been advertised but once, some one of those who constitute the public, may have read the advertisement, and may wish to obtain farther knowledge of it from a Review. And not finding it there noticed, he has a right to complain; and to accuse the conductor or conductors of such Review, of a dereliction of duty.

The Author has been led to these remarks, because, as has been above hinted, he has had more than one publication (which also have been very much spoken of) fairly before the public, for nearly twelve months. And he has never yet heard, that the least notice has been taken of them, in any one of the periodical

works, professing to be Reviews. And what makes the matter still stranger is, that the Publisher had instructions (which no doubt he obeyed) to send copies of these performances to the respective Review-offices. Of this the author complains not on his own account: for, as to himself, he is indifferent about the notice of these sages; and feels very confident, that he shall gain publicity, without their aid. But, on behalf of his readers, he does complain; who having formed their own opinion of the works, are anxious to ascertain, and have a right to be gratified, how far their private opinion coincides with that public opinion, for which they pay, and if which be withheld, they are not only much disappointed, but grossly defrauded.

Many a one has asked the Author "What is the reason that his Poems are not reviewed?" "It is in vain," say they, "that they look for any account of them in their Review." Let the Reviewers themselves answer the question. The Author challenges them to do it.

Courteous Reader!—The present work is not of a satirical cast. At least it has not this *demerit.* What are its merits, the Author once more leaves thee to judge for thyself. And as he does not think it probable, that thou wilt have any assistance from the Reviewers, he begs leave to recommend to thee a careful perusal thereof, previously to making up thy mind. To tell thee in what estimation he holds it himself, would only be to express to thee the sentiments of a father for a child;—of a Jacob for a Benjamin;—for like him it is his latest born. Doubtless it has many blemishes; but to him, if not so many beauties, thou wilt readily believe, they are not very perceptible. He thinks it fairer than the sun;—and brighter than the conflagration, which it attempts to describe. But as thou wilt, doubtless, think very differently of it, he begs leave to repeat to thee, in extenuation of its faults, that it was a *very hasty production;*—undertaken to oblige a Friend, who was pleased to think so well of the qualities of the Author's heart and mind, as *to indulge a hope, at*

least, that satire was not his only talent.—It was to be finished and put to press within a certain time;—and the obligation was more than kept.

Courteous Reader!—It will not be long before the Author has the honor to address thee again. In the meanwhile, go and shed a tear over the ruins of Moscow. Farewell.

POSTSCRIPT.

A SEQUEL to this Poem is intended to be given, and is already in a train of preparation for the press. This sequel will comprise the series of events which took place, during the disastrous retreat of the French army from Moscow. It will, in short, be descriptive of the horrors of that unparalleled flight, for to call it a retreat is an abuse of the term.—It was originally intended to comprehend the whole matter in one Poem;—and, in fact, the sequel will be nothing more than a continuation of the same subject. But as the action of the present Poem is completed, by the expulsion of the French from Moscow, the Author thought it advisable to submit it to the Public, under its present title, in order to ascertain how far his performance met with their approbation. When the sequel is added, (which will likewise be distributed into three Cantos,) the whole will make one complete Poem, answering to the title of "Russia's Retribution; or, Moscow Avenged."

CANTO I.

Argument to Canto I.

At evening, after the battle of Borodino, Prince Kutusoff calls a council of war; at which it is debated, whether the Russian army shall remain in its then position, and risk every thing for the defence of Moscow; or retreat, and leave Moscow to its fate.—Prince Kutusoff's speech.—General Benningsen's speech, recommending retreat.—The Hettman Platoff's speech, discommending that measure.—Prince Kutusoff's speech, declaring his acquiescence in the plan of General Benningsen.—The Russians retreat.—The order of retreat described.—Buonaparte's emotions, at seeing the Russian army in retreat.—His order for pursuit.—Description of the pursuit.—The Russians throw up redoubts on the Sparrow mountain.—Prince Kutusoff's emotions, at abandoning the capital to its fate.—The inhabitants of Moscow, in obedience to a pre-arranged plan, and a signal from the Sparrow mountain, emigrate from the city.—The Russian army defiles through Moscow, and takes the direction of Kalouga.

MOSCOW,

&c.

A Poem.

CANTO I.

THE setting sun had glanced his sloping beam
Athwart Kalouga's heights, and Moskwa's stream;—
That stream so bright, when morn its lustre shed,
Empurpled now with blood, and choaked with dead:
When Russia's hoary chief, his country's boast,
To council calls the chieftains of his host.

At Borodino met, the assembled chiefs,
To ease their hearts, first interchanged their griefs :
Each mourned a friend, the victim of that day,
Now stretched on earth, a lifeless lump of clay.
For prince Bagration every eye a tear
Let fall,—not dead, but soon to press the bier.
Pierced with a mortal wound, the warrior brave,
No help could succour, and no skill could save.

When thus Smolensko's prince:—" In vain, my
" friends,
" To dead or dying chiefs our care extends.
" Bagration's mortal stroke all hope precludes;—
" A warrior's death his brilliant life concludes.

" What now our councils, and our cares demands,
" Is how to harass most the hostile bands.
" If here we stay, and risk another field,
" Our holy city's fanes and towers to shield;
" And Borodino's plains, and Moskwa's flood,
" Once more be drenched and stained with streams of
" blood;
" And, like a refluent wave, that, from the deep,
" Was furious dashed against some craggy steep,
" Once more the foe be foiled, and backward driven,
" And taught that Russia's arm is nerved by Heaven;
" Yet still his vast reserves secure retreat;
" And well can nimble Frenchmen use their feet.
" Mocked, and insulted by a ruthless foe,
" Our country's vengeance aims a deadlier blow;

" And bids us teach this scourge of humankind
" A lesson he will longer bear in mind.
" Great is the aim to which your prince aspires;
" And great the sacrifice which it requires:
" But Alexander shuns no sacrifice;
" He stakes his crown to win the glorious prize.
" For partial triumphs we no longer strive;—
" To check the insulting foe, or backward drive.
" Destruction on his squadrons must be hurled;
" Or captive lead, or sweep them from the world.
" Advise then, chiefs (and keep this end in view),
" What plan 'tis most expedient to pursue:
" Whether the battle's shock again to wait;
" Or, marching off, leave Moscow to its fate."

A moment's pause ensued, while every eye
Was fixt where noble Benningsen stood nigh;
The chief who Russia's hardy sons led forth,
When first Napoleon burst upon the North;
Who from Yankova, while a field he sought,
So well retreated, and at Eylau fought;
And taught the domineering troops of France
To bite the dust before the Cossac lance.

The warrior took the hint, and waved his hand,
With modest grace, while all attentive stand.

" Prince, as your Highness bids, no leave I crave,
" To speak my mind before these wise and brave.

" 'Tis questioned, whether battle or retreat,
" Will most conduce to work the foe's defeat?
" Retreat has this advantage, clear to all,
" Whene'er invaders seek a nation's fall,
" That time is gained its forces to unite,
" And all its energies to bring to light.
" The foe's designs more manifestly shewn
" Excite a warmer interest for the throne:
" And all, with prompt alacrity and zeal,
" Unite their efforts for the general weal.
" And, as th' invaded feels his strength increase,
" And spurns the thought of armistice or peace;
" So does th' invader, in the same degree,
" Rise in the scale of imbecility.

" Drawn from his means, inveigled onwards, till
" To extricate himself exceeds his skill;
" Constrained th' unequal combat now to try;
" Defeat is death; for whither can he fly?
" And victory, as Pyrrhus felt of yore,
" But leaves him weaker, than he was before.
" This reasoning, true of all invaded powers,
" Is still more forcible, applied to ours;
" Where soon the rigors of a clime severe,
" And winter's horrors will deform the year.
" Let but the foe advance, and lingering stay,
" Till snows descend,—he falls an easy prey.
" 'Tis true,—to yield our Illium to the foe,—
" Our fanes, and palaces, without a blow;

" To see Napoleon's eagle spread its wings,
" To flout the mouldering relics of our kings,
" Is hard, and galling to a patriot's heart;
" Yet calm Reflection sees 'tis Wisdom's part.
" For if, th' aggressor's ruin to complete,
" And plunge him in disaster and defeat,
" Our capital, awhile possest, conduce,
" Where he may joy imaginary truce;
" Then,—why be prodigal of blood to save,
" What, lost, will but allure him to his grave?
" Those tender feelings, and those fond desires,
" Which home, with all its charities, inspires,
" Must now to dire necessity give way,
" And leave expedience our resolves to sway.

" Tho' dear the patriot's altars, and his hearth;

" And dear his little native nook of earth;

" His dearer country, menaced thus with chains,

" An interest nearer to his heart maintains.

" Home, kindred, friends, and dear connections all,

" Let go their hold, at his dear country's call.

" Wert that we only battle for a town,

" And not to vindicate th' imperial crown,

" Then Moskwa our Thermopylæ should be;—

" Our grave, or theatre of victory.

" But now, we wage not war for Moscow's sake;

" The foe's extinction is the glorious stake.

" And here to wait his battle's shock again,

" Were but to waste an empire's blood in vain.

" 'Tis therefore my advice, that we retire,
" To where Kalouga's woody heights aspire;
" And there await the ardent patriot bands,
" Which Russia pours from all her subject lands."

He spoke: the chiefs exprest their joint assent,
The foe t'inveigle, and to circumvent.
No partial vengeance would their souls suffice;
All staked their all, and Europe was the prize.
" In vain, with vengeance armed, has Russia bled;
" In vain has Havoc been let loose," they said;
" Unless destruction on the foe be hurled;
" Or captive lead, or sweep him from the world.

" No toil, privation, sacrifice we shun;

" Nor think, till Moscow fall, the war begun."

Platoff, alone, dissented from the rest;

And thus a warrior's sentiments exprest:—

" Prince, tho' not Russia's subject, but ally;

" None have her interests more at heart than I;

" None more indignant at her wrongs and woes,

" Wish fiercer vengeance on her ruthless foes.

" Yet why delay the stroke? th' advantage, gained

" With seas of blood,—with blood should be main-

" tained.

" Why not even now the baffled foe pursue;

" Or with to-morrow's light the fight renew?

" From vales where Tanais winds his mazy course,
" I led to war my hardy troops of horse.
" To face the foe, and not their backs to turn,
" Is all the rudiments of war they learn.
" The hostile squadrons seen, they couch their spears,
" Lance on his ranks, and leave behind their fears.
" Who speaks to them of flight, or foul retreat,
" Speaks to the wind, as they both deaf and fleet.
" What tho' twelve thousand Russians bite the plain;
" Napoleon mourns at least as many slain;
" And foiled to-day, and worsted in the fight,
" Perhaps even now he meditates his flight.
" His confidence, unshaken heretofore,
" Except when Eylau bled, and Esling tore

" The wreath of victory from the brow of France,
" (Ere Austria crouched beneath her shivered lance,)
" Now wavering,—vacillating,—views the brink
" Of ruin, and is half-prepared to sink.
" Strike, Russia, and the foe no longer strives:
" Retreat;—again his confidence revives.
" Exulting thou shalt see the Gaul come on
" In proud array, as if for victory won;
" With eagles far advanced, which safely caged,
" Skulked in the rear, while yet the battle raged.
" 'Tis thus he tarnishes the well-earned fame
" Of laurelled armies, and usurps their claim:
" And thus the victor of his palm bereaves:
" —We fly,—he triumphs; and the world believes."

Thus Hettman, while his vivid eye-balls roll,
And speak the ardor of a generous soul.
His gesture dignified, and manly air,
Majestic form, and hoary head of hair,
Still as a summer's noon attention gain;
Tho' failed his words approval to obtain.

To him Prince Kutusoff;—" Beloved of Mars,
" Thou prime of warriors, and thou soul of wars;
" 'Tis not to shun the foe that we retire,
" And leave our pillaged towns to hostile fire.
" 'Tis not to save ourselves we quit the post;
" But to entrap an overweening host.

" Moscow he seeks: then why not yield the bait,

" Which lures him to inevitable fate?

" Why drench our plains with blood, and choak the

" tomb,—

" Not to accelerate, but retard his doom?

" Our holy city's palaces and fanes

" Excite his lust for sacrilegious gains.

" A gilded bait our temples he shall find,

" Instead of quarters, and reception kind.

" 'Tis not the edge of battle that we shun;

" Bear witness, Heaven!—and thou declining sun,

" Which now th' Atlantic gildest with thy ray,

" And seem'st to blush 'Farewell' to this rude day!

" No!—Battle or retreat must be withstood,
" As this or that promotes the general good.
" A soldier's life is not a soldier's care;
" 'Tis not for him to waste it, nor to spare.
" It is the treasure of his prince, and lent,
" When public good requires it, to be spent.
" And, as he may not shun the bloody strife,
" So may he not be prodigal of life.
" The foe's destruction is the end we choose;
" This to accomplish we the means must use.
" Mine, therefore, add I to the general voice,
" And make the plan of Benningsen my choice.
" To Toula's, and Kalouga's fields we go,
" And leave delusive triumph to the foe.

" But not till morning dawns, and we have paid
" The last sad duties to each valiant shade:
" Thus shall Napoleon fail of one pretence
" For claiming victory, when we march from hence.
" For who to such proud boast will credence yield,
" When Russia tells,—she slept upon the field?
" Do you, Platoff, your light-armed scouts send forth,
" To scour th' adjacent country,—south and north.
" Lance on his flanks, exposed to quick surprize;
" And keep him to the space he occupies.
" His front, when once he views our lighted fires,
" No check besides,—no barrier else,—requires.
" Meanwhile 'tis our's to give the orders due;
" And execute the plan we have in view."

The council ended; and the chiefs repaired
Each to his post, and there his duties shared.

Now Night, the soldier's friend, her curtain spread;
And sleep revisits his unpillowed head.
No couch of down his toil-worn limbs repairs;
No prattling children soothe a parent's cares.
Exposed to Heaven's cold damps the warrior lies;
The earth his bed;—his canopy the skies.
Now stilly Silence reassumes her sway,
Where roared the battle's thunder, while 'twas day;
Save that, at intervals, was heard the moan
Of feverish wounded,—and their dying groan;

Heart-piercing sounds,—if hearts of flesh there be;
Yet music's sweetest notes, proud Gaul, to thee.

The sun had risen on the earth,—when, lo!
Platoff, who watched the movements of the foe,
Reports that reinforcements,—foot and horse,
Were on their march to join the hostile force.
These near at hand announced the thundering drum:
Some said 'twas Victor from Smolensko come.

This news invigorated,—not alarmed—
The Russian host,—to fears and dangers armed;
Firm on their ground prepared to stand or fall,
Till well-arranged retreat should save them all.

'Twas past meridian's blaze, and Sirian heat,
When now the patriot bands commenced retreat.
In columns formed, the slow-receding train
Take diverse routes the destined point to gain.
Three columns was their order;—that the road
Of Peselina (cumbered with the load
Of twenty thousand wounded) takes;—while these,—
The exterior columns,—marching more at ease,
And forming, where the rear the Cossacs close,
A salient angle, pointing to the foes,—
In parallel directions shape their route;
And guard the centre column from pursuit.

Meanwhile Napoleon on the summit stood
Of Borodino's ridge, where, flanked with wood,

An elevated spot, which crowned the height,
O'erlooked the theatre of Moskwa's fight;
And, safe from Cossac ambush, took his view,
Prepared to fly, if needful, or pursue.
Surrounded with his marshalls stood the chief;
And much he felt of anguish, and of grief,
Not for his comrades, or his soldiers slain,
But lest inglorious flight his plume should stain.
When, lo!—exciting transport and surprize,
The retrograding columns meet his eyes.

" They run! they fly!—the fugitives are off!
" There go the vanquished Arabs of Platoff,
" And there the beaten hordes of Kutusoff!

" They run!—they fly!"—the ravisht Gaul exclaims
(Then calls his wondering generals by their names);
" Haste, Echmubl!—Poniatowski!—Naples,—haste!
" Haste, Elchingen!—now see the foe disgraced.
" Who tells me, now, that yesterday's affair
" Was not a splendid triumph?—who will dare
" Assert, that Russian generals are not sots;
" Her armies savage hordes of sans-culottes?—
" Now will I thunder on their broken rear;
" And make the flying Cossac drop his spear.
" Now will I whip these miscreants from the field,
" And Moscow's plunder to the victors yield.

He spoke; and, phrenzied with excess of joy,
Breathed horrid vengeance, furious to destroy.

Revenge, the darling passion of his mind,
Now burst the thin disguise of craft refin'd ;
Craft that can wear a smooth, unaltered face,
Till time and opportunity take place,
And give the victim, which its crimes withstood;
Then gnashing,—foaming,—writhing for his blood;
Which, hoarding up displeasure, and dislike,
And waiting for th' unguarded hour to strike,—
Until th' envenomed soul, with poison fraught,
Scarce hides its malice, and conceals its thought,—
Then, when the opportunity is given,
Bursts like Jove's thunder thro' the vault of Heaven.
For souls vindictive, which on spite repast,
Tho' slow to strike, are sure to strike, at last :

A selfish cowardice checks the willing steel;—
But, self preserved, no mercy can they feel.

His camp Napoleon hastens to regain,
With lighter heart than when he left the plain.
Forthwith the rolling drum, and trumpet's clang,
Proclaim pursuit, that hill and valley rang.
Aloud the order of the day was read;—
" Soldiers!—your work is done: the foe is fled.
" The sun of Austerlitz presaged his flight;
" Your emperor told you so before the fight.
" Frenchmen!—be Frenchmen still!—the foe's retreat
" Leaves Moscow's golden treasures at your feet!

" A thousand palaces, a thousand fanes—
" Shall pour their riches, to reward your pains;
" And latest ages with delight shall say,
" —' He gained his wealth at Moskwa's bloody fray.'
" Soldiers!—March on!—Frenchmen, be Frenchmen
" still;
" Doubt God, and man;—but not your emperor's
" skill."

With deafening shouts the exulting host replied;
And loud acclaim sent forth from every side.
Anon the brazen trumpets clanged again,
While marshalled squadrons glittered o'er the plain.

Quick, as the lightning-flash, the troopers wheel;
More slow, the huge cuirassiers cased in steel.
The nimble infantry deep columns form,
Nor longer dread the artillery's iron storm.

Now blazed the sun-bright eagles in the van;
And waving banners spoke the pride of man.
Three columns was the order of pursuit;
Each owned its chief, and took a different route.
One Italy's vice-gerent's orders heard;
Naples led one;—Sarmatia's prince the third.
Behind the centre, circled with his guards,
Th' imperial chief their proud array regards.

Three moving forests seemed they to his view,
Such their extent, and such their order due;
And such their worth, to his ferocious mind,
As mountain forests, flouted by the wind:
Like them to perish, when his lust requires;
Cut down for timber, or to feed the fires.
Three bristled woods of spears they passed along:
He tells their numbers;—" Eighty thousand strong:
" Besides reserves at hand to swell the account,
" Twice fifty thousand making the amount."

And now his heart with hellish pride distends;
He glories in his fate,—his stars commends.

Such feelings now his ravisht bosom swell,
As ne'er before were felt, except in hell;
When the grim captain of the Stygian host,
Reviewed his legions on the burning coast;
And, glorying in his strength, and empire given,
Hurled fierce defiance towards the vault of Heaven.

Slow moved the Russian columns on their way,
Compact (not crowded) and in just array.
Their distance well preserved,—well understood,
Each nice arrangement—keeps their order good;
And thus prevents the mischiefs, and the crash,
By jarring caused, when mighty bodies clash:

As ships, at sea, when lowering tempests sweep,
Run foul, and sink each other in the deep.

Th' unhappy wounded, jolted in their cars,
Moan piteously, and oft complain of wars;
And many a dying groan of warrior brave
Proclaims another victim of the grave.
All's well beside,—the flanks, the van, the rear;
Tho' prest by hostile squadrons hovering near.

Swift as an arrow from the Parthian's bow,
(Who flies to fight, and thus entraps his foe,)
From flank to flank the gallant Hettman darts;
A sure relief to all the labouring parts.

Now here, now there, the watchful chief is seen,—
A god in stature, and of godlike mien.
Now here, now there, his eager squadrons fly,
Where'er impending danger hovers nigh.
In vain the wary foe, to shun attack,
Oft keeps aloof, and often turns his back:
Pursuing he's pursued; or prostrate falls,
Before the victor; and for mercy calls.
In vain, resentful of the insult given,
He rallies, faces, and is headlong driven,
With blind impetuosity impelled;—
The yielding Cossacs, now from fight withheld;
Opening a passage, diverse as they wheel,
He plunges furious on a wall of steel:

The meeting columns, like a Spartan wedge,
Present a steely point, and double edge,
Impenetrable to the weightiest force,
And equally repelling foot and horse.

Six times the car of Phœbus went its round;
As many nights spread darkness o'er the ground,
While thus th' unbroken phalanxes recede;
Nor halt, by foes constrained; but when they need;
And when the balm of sleep their toils demand:
Then, half repose,—while half undaunted stand,
To guard from peril those, whom sleep repairs;
And then participate like friendly cares.

Tho' countless myriads thunder on their rear,
They shrink not from their post, nor danger fear.

At length the Sparrow mountain's top they gain,
Whose gentle slope is blended with the plain,
Where Moskwa meets Neglina's confluent wave,
The imperial city's hallowed feet to lave.

There halt the mighty columns, while their chief,
A moment yields to patriotic grief.
He views the gilded domes, and glittering spires;
And mourns the sacrifice which Fate requires.
The work of ages, and an empire's pride
To sink at once!—he scarce can stem the tide

Of sorrow, bursting from his heart o'erfraught,
And anguished to despair, at such a thought.

The time was short: he wept;—'twas all he could:
Straightway, by Moscow's sons well understood,
The promised signal he aloft displays:
Forthwith they crowd the streets, the lanes, the ways;
And quit their homes, and seek the distant plain,
A mixt, confused, and melancholy train,
Of maids, and matrons,—infants at the breast,
Decrepit age, and priests in holy vest.
And many a lingering look they backward sent;
And many a sigh was uttered as they went.

On Sparrow Mount, the troops without delay,
Construct redoubts, to keep the foe at bay;
Nor less the columns hide from view, the while
Thro' the vast town and suburbs they defile;
And, free from observation shape their course,
To fields where classic Tanais took its course:
And where Kalouga's stream, and Toula's lake,
Behold the Don its mazy progress take.
This done, they join the retrograding host,
And leave Napoleon's pride an empty boast;
Some useless cannon crowning their redoubts,
Of six days close pursuit the splendid fruits.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.

Argument to Canto II.

Napoleon arrives on the Sparrow Mountain.—His emotions at beholding the city of Moscow; which (with all its wealth) he now thinks within his grasp.—The distant appearance of this splendid city described.—The King of Naples, commanding the advanced guard of the French army, takes possession of Moscow, and hoists the Gallic ensign on the top of the Kremlin.—At this signal, Napoleon makes his triumphant entry.—He takes up his quarters in the imperial palace, situated in the Kremlin.—His conduct there.—The French Generals partake of a banquet in the great hall of the palace.—They all retire to rest.—Napoleon is lodged in the room, in which Peter the First was born.—His troublesome dream.—He is frightened out of sleep.—His prayer,—under the impression that the last day was come.—He is pacified by the King of Naples, who bursts in, exclaiming, that the brigands had set fire to the town.—They walk upon the battlements to see the fire.—Description thereof.—Measures taken to stop the progress of the flames.—Buonaparte's behaviour to a Cossac chief, who is brought before him, to answer to the charge of setting fire to Moscow.—Further particulars of Napoleon's violent behaviour.—Prince Kutusoff reaches Kalouga and Toula.—Prince Bagration dies.—His dying apostrophe to Moscow.—End of Canto II.

MOSCOW,

&c.

A Poem.

CANTO II.

THE sun had reached the zenith, and his rays
Filled Heaven's wide concave with a fiery blaze,
Illuming Moscow's domes, and spires, and fanes,
When first the Sparrow Mount Napoleon gains.
A flood of radiance,—azure, gold, and blue,
Gleamed far and wide upon his ravisht view.

The Kremlin's gilded spires, and gilded globes,
Outshone the splendor of imperial robes.
The roofs of glittering fanes, and painted domes,
Surpassed the peacock's variegated plumes.
Her thousand palaces, but faintly seen,
In Fancy's mirror, now unfold their sheen;
And far exceed the imaginations vain,
Which lured his avarice, and which fired his brain.
He's drunk with savage joy, and scarce conceals;
Scarce checks the wild emotions that he feels.

" Soldiers!—the rich reward of all your toils
" Is now at hand,—that city's glittering spoils.

" See how it blushes, conscious of its charms,
" Like Prussia's queen amid the clash of arms;
" And seems to wait its lover's warm embrace,
" With trembling expectation's ruddy grace.
" Soldiers!—march on;—the glittering prize secure;
" No foe resists you, and the prey is sure."

Proud Naples led the van;—the troops advance;
And Moscow's gates receive triumphant France.
With wonder filled, they view, when they arrive,
A town deserted,—not a peopled hive.

The centre of the city gained at last,
The scouts report the Kremlin's barrier fast.

And, as the van approaches, from the towers,
Its ranks are overwhelmed with leaden showers.
Confused, they turn their backs, and take to flight;
But Naples stops them; and renews the fight:
His cannon plants against the Kremlin's gate;
Which, ill prepared for combat, yields to Fate.
Its rude defenders willingly retire;
And wait the time when force shall yield to fire.

And now, unfurled, proud France's banner waves
O'er towers, where monarchs slumber in their graves;
The czars of Russia, and her proud czarines;
A mingled group of mouldering kings and queens.
Flouting the sky, her banner streamed afar,
Announcing triumph, and a pause of war;

While yet Napoleon on the mountain stood,
And viewed the radiant blaze, and amber flood;
For now the setting sun's departing ray
Had changed to amber all the rich display;
Anxious he waited, till the flag, unfurled,
Gave signal that the conqueror of the world
Might fearless his triumphant entry make,
And at the imperial dome his station take;
The palace of the czars, 'twas now exprest,
By signal, waited to receive its guest.

Ardent, and prompt the glittering pomp to lead,
Proud France's idol vaults upon his steed.
Surrounding marshalls swell the gorgeous state;
And on their upstart lord obsequious wait.

The imperial guards their tinsel pride unfold,
And seem a moving mass of burnished gold.
Next, with quick step, the gay battalions pass;
And last, the mail-clad troop,—a steely mass.
At intervals, the bristled corps between,
And crowded in the glittering van are seen,
Eagles, and banners,—equerries and relays
Caparisoned in gold,—of fools the gaze.

Arrived the city-gates, the thundering drum,
And trumpet's clang proclaim the hero come.
He enters, while the martial music blows
Triumphant mockery of Russia's woes.

" A present god!" his shouting host exclaim;
" Vive l'Empereur!—long live Napoleon's name!"
He hears, and glories in himself alone;
Like atheist Herod, seated on his throne:
He hears, exults, but thinks not once of God;
Like Pella's madman, or Judæa's rod.

And now chagrin and damp their hearts invade,
To see unnoticed pass the cavalcade.
Amazement grew, as onward still they drove,
And found a town unpeopled as a grove.
No deputation welcomes their approach;—
No magistrates, nor magisterial coach.

Still as they pass, their heads strange fancies fill,
That all was dreary, desolate, and still.
No footsteps clanked,—no groupes assembled round,
Attracted by the pomp, and martial sound.
Along the streets, no gaping crowds were placed;
No blooming nymphs, like flowers, the windows graced.
Religious horror made their spirits sink;
And even apostate France began to think.
They felt, as if the deep presageful gloom,
Announced an earthquake, or the general doom.

Wide open fly the Kremlin's massive gates,
And suppliant Naples on his sovereign waits.

Thro' streets of palaces the way he led,
To where Great Peter's mansion reared its head.
There, opening to receive a Gallic lord,
The imperial towers their sheltering roof afford.

He enters, and the spacious pile surveys;
Traverses all its avenues and ways;
And searches all its rooms and quarters round;
Lest foes should lurk, or treasures not be found.
But chief the treasury, where the effulgence bright
Of crown and royal robes his lust excite.
With heart elate he views the dazzling prize;—
The sparkling jewels fix his ravisht eyes.

Their magnitude appears, and precious cost,
A rich equivalent for armies lost.
He thinks, how gay St. Cloud, when ceased his toils,
Will plume itself on these barbaric spoils;
And how Louiza, gazing on their charms,
Will bless the day that gave her to his arms.
Forthwith he orders, that these fruits of war,
Be stampt *Napoleon*, to *erase* the *Czar*.

St. Michael's holy pile he visits next,
Where mouldering kings, with state no longer vext,
In elevated sepulchres repose;—
Stript of their grandeur;—but escaped from woes.

Here mighty Peter slept in ermined pride;
And haughty Catherina by his side;
In tombs, which silver fringe, and tissued vest,
Of gold-wrought cloth, distinguished from the rest.
Well was it for the tissued tombs of kings,
That Michael's fane could boast of costlier things;
Else had their gay attire, by Avarice rude
Stript off, adorned the Thuilleries or St. Cloud.
But candlesticks of silver and of gold,
And molten virgins greater charms unfold;
Divert the spoiler from inferior gains;
And save from insult royalty's remains.
These, stampt Napoleon, seek a new abode,
Packed up for France; and soon upon the road.

And now the bell's exhilarating call,
Announced the banquet in Great Peter's hall;
That hall, where erst the warrior and the sage
Gave audience;—now the scene of festive rage.
Its central pillar huge, of fluted stone,
With gilded architrave superbly shone.
The vaulted roof's wide concave overspread,
Branched from its top, and rested on its head;
And seemed a mighty oak's umbrageous shade,
Profusely o'er its parent-trunk displayed.
Resplendent lamps and chandeliers their light
Send forth, t'illume the sable brow of night.

The chiefs carouse: Napoleon fills the chair;
They crown the bumper, and they toast the fair.

" Health to Louisa, and the king of Rome,
" With three times three; and all the fair at home."
Of Italy's free nymphs they talked, and swore;
But of Vienna's lovely maidens more,
Who hardly yielded their reluctant charms,
When Austria's feeble monarch doffed his arms.
And of Berlin's half-Frenchified coquettes;
And Andalusia's veiled, and coy brunettes.
And soon they hoped to revel in the bliss
Of British beauty, and to share its kiss.
Of Moscow's daughters not a word they said;—
Too much it grieved them that the prey was fled
Chagrined, their carnal appetite to find
Defeated,—avarice usurps their mind;

And ardently they wish the morning ray,
To pounce upon the pillage, when 'tis day.

Napoleon gives the sign;—the chiefs retire
To golden dreams of gratified desire.
A couch, with purple canopy o'erspread,
Received the imperial robber's feverish head:
For still, on vengeance, and on plunder bent,
His ardent brain with sanguine views was rent.

'Twas midnight,—th' hour when innocence can taste
Sweet sleep, tho' wildered on a trackless waste.
The scourge of nations now had sunk to rest:
But frightful dreams his heated brain infest.

Lone over craggy steeps he seemed to go;
And saw the encroaching waters foam below.
With horrid gush came on the rolling flood,
Fast stretching to the brink whereon he stood.
The scene enlarges;—Fancy gives the rein,
And brings conflicting armies on the plain:
'Tis now the Danube rolls beneath his feet;
And Essling's combatants in battle meet.
Soon point meets point; *his* broken ranks give way;
Gaul bleeds, while Austria's arm hath strength to slay.
He flies for refuge,—but he knows not where;
His tottering knees refuse their load to bear.
No progress made; the vengeful foe is near,
And now, at hand, uplifts the fatal spear;

When suddenly he gains the further side,
As 'twere by magic wafted o'er the tide.
There Montebello, bleeding fast to death,
His hand embraces, and, with dying breath,
Exhorts his prince to kiss the Almighty's rod,
Wage war no more, but make his peace with God:
When furious, and forgetful of the past,
He spurns the friendly hand that held him fast,
And leaves the insulted chief to breathe his last.

To Moskwa's blood-stained banks now shifts the scene,
Far distant, and a weary waste between.
A furious battle rages on the field;
Nor these, nor those—the palm of victory yield.

The Gaul assaults;—the foemen stand their ground;
Both bleed apace; and both deplore the wound.
Repulsed, the assailants seek their native land;
And curse their leader, and his hard command.
He dreads their vengeance, and he shuns the blow;
But driven from empire, whither can he go?
Forlorn,—a wandering outcast,—now he dreams
Of Corsica's wild mountains, vales, and streams;
With what disdain he viewed his primal lot,
How scorned the meanness of his native cot,
While yet of empire, and of power possessed;
And how 'twould gall his pride, and soil his crest;
In low estate his course again to run;
Of humble sire, once more the humble son.

And now kind Fancy, to relieve him, takes
The reasoning power, which oft in sleep awakes.
She represents the objects which affright,
But empty dreams, and visions of the night:
And that when morning dawns, and sleep is fled,
He'll find himself an emperor, and in bed.
But yet realities so present seem,
He finds it hard to think it all a dream.
Perplexed, distracted,—yet too proud to weep,
He starts,—he rolls,—he tosses in his sleep.
These visions pass, and Fancy works again,
And holds another mirror to the brain.
A giant figure,—but of regal grace,
With majesty depicted in its face;

But huge, and brawny, and of towering head,—
With mighty strides seemed moving to his bed.
Its teeth were set on edge;—its eye-balls flashed;
And, as it moved, the floor beneath it crashed.
Damp horror chilled the Gaul, and stopped his breath;
He shrunk, as if he felt the hand of Death.
While thus the vision:—" Villain, meet thy doom!
" What dost thou here, in this my natal room?
" Vile upstart!—reptile!—puny, paltry thing!
" Base monster!—thou an emperor!—thou a king!
" I have thee now, and thou my grasp shalt feel;
" Thy recreant blood shall not pollute my steel.
" I'll squeeze thy life out, with a single grasp."
With that it stretched its hand his neck to clasp.

While struggling with the visionary foe,
The affrighted dreamer made a desperate blow,
Which burst the bonds of sleep. With wild surprise,
The moment light unseals his straining eyes,
" Horror of horrors!"—starting he exclaims ;
" What means this blaze!—The heavens are wrapt
" in flames!
" Great God!" he cries (while prostrate on the floor,
He learns, at last, his Maker to adore,)
" Great God of Heaven!—then were thy warnings
" true!
" This awful night! what scenes it brings to view!
" And is the day of judgment come at last?
" God, in thy mercy, pardon what is past!

" Oh !—I have mocked, and scoffed thy heavenly
" crown ;
" Defiled thine altars ; pulled thy temples down !—
" Oh !—I have trampled on the rights of man ;
" And made my will my law, and fraud my plan !—
" But thou art good and gracious, and canst spare !"—
Thus while he poured his guilty soul in prayer ;
Joachim, from his chamber rushing down,
Bursts in, exclaiming,—" Sire,—*they* burn the town !"

Nap.—" They !—they !—what they ?—then is't not
" God, but man ?"

Jo.—" The brigands, sire !—a rude and lawless
" clan."

" Thank God!" says he: while Naples in reply,
" Thank God! I thank not God for that; not I.
" Where's now the plunder that we hoped to find?
" Where now the winter quarters to our mind?"

Nap.—" Oh, Naples!—I was seized with strange
" alarm;—
" But now 'tis past: I'll dress, and take your arm:
" We'll walk upon the battlements, to see
" This sight of horror, and of majesty."

Anon, they sally forth; nor pause nor stop,
Till on the castle's parapetted top.

There, fixed with wonder, motionless they gaze;
And view the wasteful fire's incessant blaze.
Gods!—what a spectacle their sight o'ercame!
A vast expanse of undulating flame!
A blood-red ocean, stretching far and wide,
Still onward rolled its deep sulphureous tide:
While scintillating volumes roll on high;
And sparks and mingled smoke obscure the sky.
Ne'er had proud chieftain witnessed such a sight;
Since Priam's doom, and Illium's fatal night.
Tho' Magdeburg stern Tilly's vengeance felt;
And at his feet, in vain, the suppliants knelt;
And frantic Nero's lust, and vain desire
To realize Troy's flames, set Rome on fire.

Not such a sight great ———m's son surveyed,
When on Terboda's tower he calmly stayed;
And, while the flames encircled Flushing's head,
Asked why the volumed smoke *appeared so red.*
Nor such beheld the over-curious dame,
Who looked on burning Sodom,—seat of shame.
Such scope in Moscow's wide extended round,
The desolating element had found.
Now Boreas rising swells the fiery deep,
And o'er the flood of flame swift whirlwinds sweep:
Loud roars the eddying sulphur, furious driven,
Like thunder rolling, in the distant heaven.
At intervals is heard the horrid crash
Of falling roofs; while tumbling steeples clash.

And as the fabrics sink amid the fires,
A rushing cloud of crackling sparks aspires.
Amid the parting flames, distinctly seen,
Huge broken masses rise, of rugged mien,
And seem the fierce devourer's rage to scorn;
Tho' isolated, riven, and forlorn.
Black thro' the encircling flame, or fiery red,
They shew their bulk, and flame-enveloped head.

The Kremlin's vast circumference, unawed,
Remains,—while Desolation walks abroad:
Its domes, and spires, which yet no flames annoy,
The semblance of triumphant pomp enjoy.

Illumined with the blaze its walls opaque,
And even its gloomy towers—effulgence take;—
Much more the glittering ornaments that shone,
Profusely scattered o'er the pile of stone.
The variegated dome's pavonic pride
Flashed more resplendent than a royal bride.
The globes, that crowned the palace of the czars,
A constellation seemed of glittering stars.

And now a more enlivening scene succeeds,—
Illuminated fountains, groves, and meads:
For, as a rushing blast the prospect clears,
Forthwith the city's rural grace appears;—

Its meadows interspersed,—its parks and lawns;—
Where frisk the rein-deer, and their sportive fawns.
Its sparkling streams, their sinuous course that trace,
Now dashed in torrents, now with gentler pace.
Translucent rippling o'er its narrow bed,
Here fair Neglina draws a silver thread.
There Moskwa's broad expanse of molten glass
Reflects its bordering trees, and fringe of grass.
Far, far outstripped by these illumined vales,
Vauxhall must yield in splendor, and Versailles.

Long gazed Napoleon, charmed against his will,
And longer had he gazed, with wonder still,

So much his gloomy nature, fierce and bold,
Was pleased congenial horror to behold;—
Had not Joachim, whose less ravished sense
Was more awake to need, and consequence,
Dispersed the film of reverie, while he broke
His silent wonder, and thus briefly spoke:—
" Sire, Sire!—we loitering stand, while need require
" That orders should be given to quench the fires."
At this he started, as from sleep, and seized
The Prince's hand, with his advertence pleased;
And thus;—" True, Naples,—true!—haste, haste
" away,
" And line the streets with infantry's array;
" Let troops of horse the wider passes scour,
" And sudden vengeance on the brigands pour.

" Along the narrow lanes let showers of grape
" Incessant rain, that not a soul escape.
" But I may spare commands to him, who did
" So well the work of slaughter, at Madrid.
" Yet stop!—to some extend delusive ruth,
" That torture may extort from them the truth;
" Whether, self-moved, they hurled the flaming brand,
" Or in obedience to a chief's command;—
" That vengeance likewise may their lords o'ertake,
" If these dread fires were lighted for their sake.
" The work of slaughter done, be't next your care
" (But, apropos!—the firemen you must spare)
" To fetch the engines, deluge all the town,
" And teach the fires obedience to my frown."

He spoke, and, self-deluded, hopes to tame
The fiery deluge, and subdue the flame;
As Xerxes lashed the Helespont, to prove
His arm omnipotent as Jove's above.
But as the waves disdained an earthly god,
So did the flames the great Napoleon's rod.

Anon the bristled files of foot, displayed,
Proclaim that Naples had his lord obey'd;—
Anon the thundering cannon's brazen throat
Cries "Havoc!" and the blood-stained alleys float.
The avenues are blocked, and all egress
Precluded, by the wary chief's address.

Now morn began to dawn; in Peter's hall,
Assembled marshalls crowd around the Gaul.
A military consistory waits,
To try the brigands, and decide their fates.
When, lo! midst other captives that are brought
Before the dread tribunal,—wrapt in thought,
And as it were regardless of the scene,
One firm advances, of superior mien.
His eye was fixt, his port erect, his face
Bespoke life's prime, and manhood's vigorous grace.
His long descending beard, and beaked nose,
Bespoke the Cossac, terrible to foes.
Him thus distinguished from the captive crew,
Napoleon eyes with keen suspicious view;

And thus: " Ho, villain!—you that skulk behind,
" Of savage lineaments, that speak your mind!
" What prompted you,—Rostopchin's, or your own
" Insatiate lust,—to burn *my* conquered town?"
With marked astonishment he answers,—" Sire!"

Nap.—" What prompted you to set *my* town on fire?"
(Rejoins Napoleon)—" Speak, or you repent,
" Forthwith to torture, and vile durance sent."

" We burnt it, sire, that it might not be yours"
(The patriot adds): " and, by the heavenly powers,
" May wolves and foxes litter in her fanes,
" Sooner than Moscow yield to Gallic chains!"

" Away with him!—off!—off!—to instant death!"
Exclaims Napoleon, pale, and out of breath,
With rage ungoverned. Straight, the guards obey,
And from th' imperial hall he's forced away.
But while he fixes still Napoleon's look,
Of fierce revenge (not dignified rebuke,)
He adds these ominous words at parting;—" Sire!
" You'll find that frost is not less fierce than fire;
" When thousands upon thousands of your host,
" Shall envy me the chains, that now I boast."

He scarce had spoke; and from the hall was led;
When Naples, much confused, rushed in, and said;
" Sire! half the town a heap of ruins lies,
" And still the fiery volumes sweep the skies.

" The engines are removed; no hope is left
" To our exertions, thus of help bereft.
" The firemen too are fled; and all in vain
" To check the furious element we strain."

" Curse on the wretch Rostopchin, slave of slaves!"
(Exclaims Napoleon, while he stamps, and raves.)
" The engines all removed!—so, he forsakes
" His cannon, base paltroon! and engines takes.
" Why, sure the fool was mad, his guns to slight;
" And with an *engine-train* impede his flight.
" Vile wretch! base satellite of czars and brutes!
" Thus to deprive a foe of victory's fruits.
" What think'st thou, Naples! was the villain mad;
" Deranged his intellect,—or judgment bad?"

Na.—" No, Sire, I think, that, heedful of our aims,
" And well resolved to sink the town in flames,
" He had the foresight to effect retreat
" With what, behind him left, his object might defeat."

Nap.—" Zounds!—foresight!—Russian foresight!—
" dost thou say?
" Who ever heard of Russian foresight, pray!
" Talk not to me of foresight in a bear!—
" Now by myself, and all the powers, I swear,"
(Th' imperial braggart adds,) " this day shall see
" That wretch Rostopchin hanging on a tree.
" Hie after him! pursue, and bring him back!
" Quick!—bustle!—why delay you the attack?

" Bring with him all his engines, and his train,
" And quench the fires, that not a spark remain."
Thus stormed the king of kings, but stormed in vain.

Meanwhile Smolensko's prince his columns leads,
And gains Kalouga's heights, and Toula's meads.
There halt the legions, undisturbed by foes,
And safe in cantonments enjoy repose.
Here prince Bagration finds the wished relief,—
A death of glory, and an end of grief.
But ere the prime of warriors closed in death
His eye coruscant, and resigned his breath,
With momentary energy inspired,
And, as from Heaven with zeal prophetic fired,

While in his cheek seraphic ardor burned,

And tow'rds the blazing east his eye he turned,

Where Moscow's huge volcano scattered round

Large flakes of fire, and spread with sparks the ground:

" Farewell!—proud city!—thou and I have seen

" A happier day, (he cries,) *and we have been.*

" Now sink we both: Napoleon sees us fall;—

" And savage exultation swells the Gaul.

" Yet shall his short-lived triumph cost him dear;

" And now, even now, is retribution near.

" Soon shall the freezing tempests, issuing forth

" To aid the hardy legions of the north,

" With ruin irretrievable assail

" His squadrons,—overwhelmed with winter's hail.

" But thou a brighter phœnix shalt arise,

" And vanquish ruin,—towering to the skies;

" A new Nicopolis, for victory gained,

" By self-devotion, and thy bed unstained;

" And I shall see thy glory from above;

" And triumph in the object of my love!"

He spoke:—and Death's cold hand his strength invades:

Life ebbs: his eyes are closed in everlasting shades.

END OF CANTO THE SECOND.

CANTO III.

Argument to Canto III.

Moscow now a heap of ruins.—Napoleon assembles his Generals, and makes a pretence of explaining to them his policy and views.—His speech.—He sends Count Lauriston to the Russian head-quarters; and orders the King of Naples to make demonstrations of resuming offensive operations.—Meanwhile the Russian levies assemble from all quarters.—Interview between Prince Kutusoff and Count Lauriston.—The proposals of Napoleon rejected.—Prince Kutusoff's speech to his Chiefs assembled in council.—General Benningsen and Count Platoff are ordered to attack the King of Naples.—The French surprized and driven back.—Count Platoff's address to the Cossacs before and after the attack.—Buonaparte much alarmed, at Moscow.—His speech to his Marshalls previously to abandoning that capital.—The French take to flight.—End.

MOSCOW,

&c.

A Poem.

CANTO III.

NOW Moscow's temples, erst a glittering train,
A smoking ruin stretched along the plain.
In vain the Gaul had stormed, and given behest,
The spreading desolation to arrest.
In vain his troops had laboured, night and day,
To check the flames,—their fury to allay.

Large breaches, in the streets, their caution made,
Where'er the deluge threatened to invade.
Whole palaces were levelled with the ground,
Its overwhelming progress to confound ;
And many a gallant soldier spent his life,
In this inglorious and unequal strife
(For tumbling masses, watchful as they toiled,
With horrid crash, their circumspection foiled).
But suddenly the north with furious gust
Full on the loitering flames impetuous burst;
Onward impelled the slackened sulphurous wave,
And o'er the interposing breaches drave.
As when a chosen party sent to storm
A battered citadel, besieged in form;—

The breach, scarce practicable, gives the foe
The 'vantage-ground, and fatal is his blow:
For many a warrior sinks beneath his spear,
While each succeeding rank is damped with fear,
A moment's pause ensues, till those behind
Urge these to death or victory 'gainst their mind.

Twice seven vicissitudes of day and night
Had spread the earth with darkness and with light,
While Great Napoleon, stupified,—perplext;
With rage inflamed, with disappointment vext;
One while pretends, his blinded slaves to gull,
That Moscow's magazines and stores were full:

That store of wines replenished vaults contained,
And comfortable quarters still remained.
One while,—more provident than vainly brave,—
And fearing that retreat alone could save,—
Their minds preparing for a change of fate,
By truths well glossed that proved their desperate
state;—
That if, all other remedies essayed,
This last attempt, so galling, should be made,
It might not seem, that by constraint he fled
Of unforeseen events;—but backward led,
By well-arranged retreat, a victor host,
To quarters, and a more convenient post.

At last necessity no longer brooks
Ambiguous counsels, and dissembled looks.
The season far advanced, the foe at hand,
Decision prompt imperiously demand.
Yet still, though provident, the worst to meet,
He thus obliquely hinted at retreat,
Self-flattered, he was not disposed to doubt,
But fortune or intrigue would bring about,—
That, truce, or peace, or armistice procured,
His late aggrandizements would be secured;
And suppliant Russia yield the prize of war;
Bending the knee to Great Napoleon's star.
His chiefs, forthwith assembled round the throne,
He thus addressed in mild-dissembling tone:—

"Princes and marshalls,—chiefs who share my love;
And whose esteem reciprocal I prove!
You see what monsters in the world abound!
This holy city levelled with the ground!
Here had I hoped to give you kind repose,
Till vernal showers dissolved the waste of snows.
Not doubting but, the while, our foes would cease
From hostile sentiments, and sue for peace;
Disheartened by the loss of such a town,
And fearing for th' existence of their crown.
And when refreshment should have well repaired
Your wasted strength, and for new toils prepared,
Then had my genius planned a mighty work;—
The conquest of Byzantium and the Turk.

In this great enterprize, 'twas meant, of course,
That vanquished Russia should unite her force.
While by a secret treaty 'twas agreed,
That she her Polish provinces should cede;
And be indemnified by vast domains,
When Turkey yielded her dismembered plains.
But now, this dire calamity, I fear,
May give us pause, and check our bright career.
Yet far from hopeless still I view the scheme;
Tho' present prospects uninviting seem.
'Tis now incumbent on us to address
Ourselves to policy, and sly finesse.
Those Russian bears, so fierce and uncontrolled,
May still, perhaps, be frightened, or cajoled.

Their stubborn principle was taught to bend,
When Tilsit's treaty made the czar my friend.
A slice of Prussia was a gilded bait;—
The gudgeon gulped it, and forgot his hate.
If then our offered peace so grateful proved,
When scarcely to his frontier we had moved;
Sure, he will hail the olive in our hand,
Thus conquerors in the bowels of his land.
At all events (should peaceful projects fail),
If to obtain a truce we but prevail;
And thus, by intercourse, occasion find,
With flattering schemes to entertain his mind;—
Thereby disarming his ferocious ire;—
We find convenient leisure to respire;—

And, while our harassed troops enjoy repose,
Inevitable ruin waits the foes:
Our vast reserves, from distant regions brought,
Shall fall upon his quarters, quick as thought.
Go, Lauriston,—to you the task is due,
Relations amicable to renew.
You know the way direct to Russian hearts,—
Their open side, and vulnerable parts.
Long resident at Alexander's court,
Full oft their foibles made you mirth and sport.
Go, and success your embassy betide;
Address yourself adroitly to their pride.
But fail not to assert, and swear by God,
What mighty forces wait your master's nod.

Repeat them all, and double their amount ;
With Austria's, Prussia's, and Bavaria's count;
While I, to spread the terror of our name,
Will cause my vassal kings to swear the same ;
And publish in their Kalenders, of course,
A double tale of their contingent force.
But, apropos!—a letter you shall take
(And this shall seem for love and friendship's sake)
Addressed to Alexander as my friend,
Which you shall ask Prince Kutusoff to send.
Meanwhile let Naples fill with horse the plain,
An attitude of menace to maintain;
From Moscow to the Pokhra, where extends
Their posted army, which the stream defends."

With promptitude the zealous chiefs obey,
And ardently pursue their destined way.

Meanwhile, from all the regions of the north,
The ardent bands of patriots issue forth,
To rally round their prince, defend the laws,
And fight and conquer in their country's cause.
Like gathering clouds, presageful of a storm,
Converging still, their gloomy ranks to form,—
From diverse realms the hardy Cossac race
Rush to the war, insensible of space.
In vain are trackless deserts interposed,
And mighty rivers in the waste disclosed:

They swim the current, dart across the waste;
Nor feel fatigue, nor rest desire to taste.

Borysthenes pours forth from all its isles,
The Zaporag, averse to female smiles;
Who, lest effeminacy should invade,
And quite unfit them for the warrior's trade,
Remote from women spend their vigorous prime,
And love delay, till peace and leisure-time.
The Don its tribute pours,—a martial train;
Nor less the Ural, and Riphæan chain;
And Caucasus its hardy mountaineers
Sends forth, equipped with dolikoskian spears;

A race who drink the Terek's cooling lymph,
Reflecting oft the charms of Georgian nymph.
Siberia sends its light-armed foot from far,
And mighty Oby hears the din of war;
And Volga's iron squadrons thunder down,
To form a steely circle round the crown;
And myriads issue from the distant shores,
Where Neva stagnates, and the Baltic roars.
Nor these alone, by discipline inured
To wants and toils, in camps to be endured;
With rustic arms, the peasantry advance;
And scythes supply the place of sword and lance.

Now Russia's chiefs, assembled in the tent
Of Marshal Kutusoff, their counsel lent.

When, lo!—by flag of truce announced, arrives
Napoleon's envoy, and for entrance strives.
Admitted (tho' unwelcome) they request
To know the business of their Gallic guest.
Low bowing, ere the proffered truce he names,
A private audience of the prince he claims.

With warmth the prince;—"My post I better know,
" Than privately to parley with a foe.
" No private business have I time to heed;
" Your public name;—or get you hence with speed."

" Prince, please your Highness, we have often met
" As friends, at court; but you must needs forget,

" With weighty cares thus charged" (the Count
replies);
" And much 'twould please me to renew the ties."

" So then (Prince Kutusoff rejoins) you burn
" Our pillaged towns,—the law of nations spurn;
" Our country ravage, and our name revile;
" And then expect to greet us with a smile.
" Know, Count! that courts and camps, as we suppose,
" Are different things;—and so are friends and foes:
" Excuse our prejudices."—Nettled much,
And stung with wrath; yet not appearing such,
But casting o'er his looks the thin disguise
Of counterfeited wonder, he replies:—

" Prince, you are misinformed.—You are deceived:
" We burn your towns! 'tis not to be believed.
" The brigands are to blame for this, not we:
" 'Tis not our interest, all the world must see."

A smile of scorn from all the chiefs around
Was th' only answer this evasion found.
When thus the Generalissimo,—" With haste,
" Your business tell; we have no time to waste."

" Napoleon greets your emperor, and sends
" This letter ('twas rejoined), which he commends
" To princely Kutusoff's dispatch;—it treats
" Of peace; and doubtless Russia's wishes meets.

" Meanwhile he offers armistice, and truce,
" Our mutual wants and sufferings to reduce;
" And soon he hopes, that re-established peace,
" Will bring, of mutual love, a rich increase.
" Much he deplores, that mighty states, which seem
" By nature formed, each other to esteem;
" That France and Russia, nations, which partake
" So many kindred virtues, should forsake
" Sound policy, so clear, when understood,
" And waste each other's strength, each other's blood:
" And that, no interests of their own to serve;—
" No realms to subjugate, nor rights preserve;—
" But England's pride and greatness to sustain,
" And make her more than mistress of the main."

Here interrupts the prince;—" Sir, keep in view,
" With such discussions I have nought to do.
" Take back your master's letter;—let him learn,
" That Alexander wants not his concern.
" And, as to truce, his offer I reject:
" I have no orders, sir, to that effect.
" My orders are to fight, and not to treat;
" And this you'll find when next our armies meet.
" Beyond the Vistula, when you are driven,
" To such proposals notice may be given."

At this the envoy, mindful of his charge,
Napoleon's mighty means began t'enlarge;—

How vast his congregated force he shew'd,
Besides immense supplies upon the road.
He summed up all the corps, and gave account,
Of each's station, leader, and amount.
The Rhine's confederate force was next displayed,
And kindred Austria's stipulated aid.
Quite specious was th' unvarnished tale he told,
With lying lips; yet with assurance bold.

To whom Prince Kutusoff,—" Go tell the Gaul,
" The time draws near, when he may need them all.
" You have my answer;—vainly you essay
" To shake my resolution: hence away!"

Now autumn's sober tints were yielding fast
To surly winter's gloom, and chilling blast.
October far advanced, with falling leaf,
Gave signal of the year's approaching grief.
But short the fleeting space which yet remained,
Ere streams should sleep, in icy fetters chained.
Smolensko's prince beheld, with glad surprize,
That Moscow's ruins still detained his prize:
(For still Napoleon fixt his quarters there;
And looked around him, but beheld no snare.)
His chiefs convened, at evening, in his tent,
A gladdened ear to these instructions lent.

" Comrades in arms, and partners of my toil;
" At length our foe shall feel the bolt recoil.

" The day of retribution dawns at last,
" And gives us ample vengeance for the past:
" And Providence, so late involved in gloom,
" Clears up apace;—th' invader waits his doom.
" For, sure, by powerful destiny enthralled,
" Or Providence divine, (more aptly called,)
" Blind, and forsaken by his wonted skill,
" Our hated foe remains at Moscow still;
" And hopes by threats, or sly intrigue, to gain,
" What rapine, fire, and sword, have sought in vain;
" And, boastful, while his strength he brings to view,
" Sees not that Russia has resources too.
" Meanwhile the time of necessary flight
" Is lost, and, *nolens-volens*, he must fight.

" For quicker than the Parthian let him fly,
" In vain he shuns th' artillery of the sky.
" From foes escaped, he yields his forfeit life ;
" And sinks beneath the elemental strife.
" To-morrow's dawn shall teach the o'erweening host,
" That Russia has not slumbered at her post.
" Her arm of vengeance, quick as lightning, bared,
" Shall give him proof, that now the rod's prepared.

" You, Benningsen, lead forth the chosen band,
" Whose ardent zeal scarce waits your wished com-
" mand.
" You see where Naples, on the Nara's banks,
" Presents a daring front, but leaves his flanks

" (On woods to ambush favourable, appuyed,)
" Quite open to surprise, from Cossac speed.
" Beyond Veukovo see his horse advance,
" With confidence, and dreading no mischance.
" Do you, this night, a forward station take,
" Full in his front; and demonstration make,
" As tho' you meditated an attack,
" With purpose to dislodge, and drive him back.
" Meanwhile Platoff shall occupy, in force,
" The flanking woods, with fleet Uralian horse;
" And, while the foe's attention you engage,
" By threatening on his front the battle's rage,
" At day-break, from their ambuscade they rush,
" And, like Jove's fire, th' unwary squadrons crush."

Prompt at their general's word the chiefs prepare,
Their charge to execute with zealous care.
First Benningsen, ere yet the shades descend,
But twilight rays their dubious lustre lend,
Leads forth his light battalions, by the foe
Distinctly seen; who ply to ward the blow.
Onward he moves, with quick but steady pace,
And meets their iron front with threatening face.
All's bustle in their ranks;—th' artillery-train
Its station takes to domineer the plain.
At intervals, the bristled corps between,
The engines of promiscuous death are seen.
With lighted match the cannoneer stands by,
And waits the signal with unwearied eye.

Now Night her curtain drops;—the view is closed
Of hostile fronts, by darkness interposed.
France hails the sable queen, and by her aid
Her battle's edge still whets behind the shade.
The mighty means that ever wait her call,
Are lavished here, to form a brazen wall.

Darkling the adverse camps consume the night,
And anxiously await returning light.

Meanwhile Platoff the flanking covert seeks,
And gains his station, ere the morning breaks.
His order of attack forthwith he plans;
Then gives short respite to his eager clans.

The troops dismount, their horses to untire,
And, leaning on their spears, awhile respire.
At signal given, their saddle-girths, made slack,
They strain, remount, and burn for the attack.

Now faintly glimmered, thro' the clouds that veil
Her saffron bed, Aurora's twilight pale:
'Twas but a dubious and reluctant ray;
Yet seemed the prelude of approaching day:
When vaulting on his steed the Cossac chief
To all his captains gave instructions brief.
Forthwith, by different outlets from the wood,
They sallied forth, and soon collected stood;—

In squadrons formed, and grasping each his lance;
Athirst for vengeance, and the blood of France.

The morning dawned apace, and light was spread,
To guide th' assailants to the bandit's bed.
The Hettman, on his pransing steed advanced,
Before the van, his eye of lightning glanced,
From wing to wing; and, ere he waved his steel,
(Of "Charge!" the signal,) thus inflamed their zeal:—

"Warriors!—the road to great revenge is clear;
"Your arm is strung;—the hated foe is near,
"No longer like a vanquished horde you fly,
"And turn your backs on certain victory.

" Those movements retrograde, which damped erewhile
" Your ardent zeal, and made you look so vile;—
" Are past; and their expediency is past;
" And you shall act th' aggressor's part, at last.
" Warriors!—I need not tell you my desires;
" You know that you must emulate your sires.
" Returned from fight, that Cossac bears a stain,
" Who brings not trophies of a foeman slain.
" Make ready!—couch your lances; spur your
" steeds;
" Charge on the foul defamer of our deeds;
" And soon, o'erwhelmed, the prostrate boaster
" bleeds."

Quick as the blast that sweeps the Libyan sands,
Impetuous, at his word, the rushing bands
Dart o'er the plain, and lance upon the foe,
And overwhelm him, like the drifting snow.
Strange havoc and confusion track their course;
For scarcely had the trumpet clanged "To horse"
In Gallia's camp, when furious burst the storm;
Nor left the broken squadrons time to form.
With hideous yell the warriors of the Don,
And Ural's hardy mountaineers rush on.
The Gallic steeds, scarce harnessed for the fight,
Confusedly scamper off, with wild affright,
Their riders left behind; who trembling stand,
And wait the vengeful Cossac's murderous hand.

For cruel Fate, and that discourteous Count,
Had not allowed them time their steeds to mount.
Disorder spreads; the Gaul disheartened flies;
The fleeter Cossac overtakes his prize.
With mangled dead the field is covered o'er,
And reeking hoofs are wet with trampled gore.

Meanwhile the hostile fronts the signal wait
Of combat,—well prepared to scatter fate.
When sudden fears the Gallic squadrons damp;
A rumour spreads,—"The Cossac's in the camp."
"Surprise!—surprise!"—from rank to rank resounds,
"Our flank is turned;—the wily foe surrounds!"

No time was to be lost; they face about,
And soon perceive disorder, and wild rout.
Here fly their scattered comrades;—there pursue
The vengeful Cossacs, terrible to view.
Their blood-red cloaks, that floated loose behind
In igneous volumes, wantoned in the wind;
And seemed to glare upon th' affrighted morn,
Like scattered fires, that waste a field of corn;
While here and there, or singly, or in groupes,
They havoc spread among the flying troops.

Now Benningsen the wished occasion hails,
And furiously the shrinking van assails.

Already put to rout, an easy prey
The hindmost fall;—the rest pursue their way,
With nimble speed, regardless of their ranks,
Beyond the Nara's interposing banks.
There, sheltered by redoubts, awhile they breathe;
But venture not again their swords to sheathe.
So much the dread of ambush fills their minds;
And Cossac yells are muttered by the winds.
Their guns, impediments, and all their spoils
Reward the victor, and enhance his toils.
Each spearman bears a cuirass, plume, and casque;
Sure proofs that he has well performed his task.

With joy their Hettman views his motley train,
Bedizened with the trophies of the slain;

Their courage, strength, and vigour, he commends;

And bids them hate their foes, and love their friends.

" Tis our's to think of courtesy," says he,

" Remote from tumult, and from danger free.

" When wars are ended, and commotions cease;

" Then let the Cossac wear the smile of Peace.

" But frowns and fierceness suit the field of strife,—

" I scorn the man who smiles and takes my life.

" No counterfeited visage will I wear,

" Nor squeeze *his* hand, whose life I must not spare.

" Who wins my smile, my friendship fairly claims;

" And justly my duplicity he blames,

" If 'tis withheld: his own *he* shall receive,

" Who claims of me;—I smile not to deceive.

"Warriors, would you your sense of duty shew?
"Your love to me, is hatred of the foe.
"Who loves his Hettman must detest the Gaul,
"And nobly conquer him, or nobly fall.
"Soon shall another field your valour prove;
"And France be taught to make a backward move.
"She shall not soon our troops have cause to tax
"With cowardice; nor complain we turn our backs."

Thus victory dawned on Russia's central arms,
While distant Dwina thundered with alarms.
There Wittgenstein moves on with hasty strides,
While his diminished head Belluno hides;

And of his strong position dispossest,
The stream recrosses, and is glad to rest.

Elsewhere, the army which Moldavia sends,
Towards the Borysthenes its progress bends.
And Austria, foiled, recedes, or vainly tries
The well-conducted columns to surprize.

Meanwhile the Kremlin's guest at length perceives
Approaching danger, and the truth believes.—
Naples repulsed, the armies in his rear,
And hovering on his flanks, give cause for fear.
Yet still to own the truth, and change his tone,
Or other cause assign than choice alone,

For quick retreat, and Moscow's post resigned,
Ill brooks his pride, and unrelenting mind.—
His chiefs convened, his orders to receive,
Ere Moscow's cindered wilderness they leave;
(For previous measures had arranged retreat)
He thus accosts, in words designed to cheat:—

" Princes, and marshalls,—present need requires,
" That I should gratify my heart's desires,
" And place my troops, remote from restless foes,
" In comfortable quarters of repose.
" The cavalry, so harassed at their post,
" Both night and day, require refreshment most.

" Those yelling Cossacs, which their flanks infest,
" Will not allow them needful time of rest.
" My engineers a faithful sketch have made
" Of Moscow's ruins, and its streets surveyed;—
" With purpose to inquire, and ascertain,
" What houses fit for quarters still remain.—
" Nine-tenths of this large city are laid waste
" (As proves their sketch); so we must hence with haste.
" The Kremlin I have fortified, and mean
" To garrison;—but should the brutish spleen
" Of Kutusoff prevent,—unmannered dog,—
" A mine is laid, to split it like a log.
" Perhaps to Toula you shall shape your course,
" And occupy the Don's detested source.

" Then should you keep the gathering Cossacs off,
" And intercept the convoys of Platoff;
" And thus the frightened savage hordes alarm,
" And make them join our standards, or disarm.
" But yet the Pole a friendly hand extends,
" And kind Sarmatia may expect her friends;—
" A hundred leagues from thence if we arrive,—
" We still can keep the threatening game alive.—
" For, from Witepsk to Petersburg, you see
" The distance less, (the road at least as free,)
" Than 'tis from Moscow to the Neva's bank;
" Besides, that Moscow now has lost its rank.
" So still we threaten Petersburg the more,
" And quarter near to Poland's plenteous store;

" And Wilna's lines of magazines hard by,
" Our strength repair, and all our wants supply."—

More had Napoleon spoke, but Cossac cries,
At distance heard, awaken his surprize;
And Naples, mindful of *his strict command*,
By courier, intimates,—" The foe at hand."
So time is precious;—not a moment's lost,
To beat a march;—the town is quickly crossed.
Napoleon quits the palace of the czars,
A fugitive; yet still as big as Mars;
And Moscow's shattered roofs once more afford
Their kindest shelter to a lawful lord.

END OF THE POEM.

NOTES.

ARTHUR

NOTES TO CANTO I.

"*DESTRUCTION on his squadrons,*" &c.]—Here the Author has to acknowledge his obligation to the poet Gray. It is not to be dissembled, that, in this couplet, he had in view an expression to be found in one of the odes of that inimitable lyric bard:—

> "*Upon Deira's squadrons hurled,*
> *To rush, and sweep them from the world.*"
>
> GRAY'S *Odes.*

"*The chief who Russia's hardy sons,*" &c.]—Benningsen was the first General of any nation, who opposed any thing like an effectual, and unequivocal check to Buonaparte's victorious career. The circumstances of the winter campaign in Poland, in the year 1806, are fresh in every one's recollection. To enlarge upon them here, would be time thrown away. Suffice it to mention, to the merited credit of General Benningsen, that he led his army to the field of battle,

which he had pitched upon at Eylau, not only in spite of Buonaparte's efforts to bring him to action sooner; but also in spite of the clamours of his own men, and their avidity for immediate combat; as appears from the following passage, in the remarks, which precede Sir Robert Wilson's account of that campaign:—"When Benningsen retired from Yankova, on the approach of Buonaparte, and sought to evade the enemy by forced marches, in the dark nights of a Poland winter, although ninety thousand men thundered on in close pursuit, the Russian murmur at retreat was so audacious,—the clamour for battle so loud and reiterated,—the incipient disorder was so frightfully extending,—that he was obliged to promise acquiescence to their demand; and to soothe their discontents, by an assurance, that he was marching to reach an appropriate theatre of combat."

General Benningsen's Speech.—Perhaps it may be questioned, whether this General was actually present at the battle of Borodino. It is true, his name was not mentioned in Prince Kutusoff's dispatches, detailing the proceedings of that bloody day. But it does not follow, that he was not therefore one of the combatants. He might not be invested with any command, at the

time; and consequently his name would not have a place in the dispatches. But as it has not been stated, in any account of the operations of the campaign, that he was actively occupied, in any other quarter, at the time, it may fairly be presumed, that a warrior of his zeal and distinguished patriotism, would not be absent from such a battle,—with or without a command. And it is most probable, that he served, on that memorable day, as a volunteer. And if so, he is very fairly brought forward, at the council of war, which took place on the scene of action. Poetry is not obliged to confine herself within the limits of well-ascertained truth. It is enough, if she be careful to adhere to verisimilitude. If a poet, describing the events of a battle or campaign, should not be allowed to travel out of the beaten track of well-authenticated facts, his Poem would be nothing better than a Gazette in verse. Moreover, it is ascertained, that General Benningsen was with the Russian Grand Army, after they retreated upon Kalouga;—and as no mention is made of him in the interim, it is the most reasonable presumption, that he was with the same army, all along. The Author, in making a speech for him, has put those sentiments and expressions into his mouth, which his known character justifies;—and this, he apprehends, is

in conformity with Horace's rule, and all that it requires:—

"*Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge.*"
HOR. *Ars Poetica.*

"*And victory, as Pyrrhus felt of yore.*"]—"*Another such a victory, and I am undone,*" said that invader; after a most sanguinary battle, in which *he* was unquestionably victorious. Had Buonaparte possessed half the candour of Pyrrhus, he might and would have made the same acknowledgment, after the battle of Borodino. For, even admitting that he gained a victory on that day, it is far from probable, that he could have afforded to fight another such a battle; allowing him to have been able to spend (to use his own inhuman expression) twenty-five thousand men a month. But perhaps his self-delusion, and that arrogancy and overweening self-sufficiency, which have always made him blind to the merits of his adversaries, or that want of candour and liberality, which has prevented him from acknowledging them, was necessary, to accomplish the designs of Providence, in leading him on to that complete degradation, with which he has at last been overtaken. We may now

be grateful to Providence, that, as he was the most successful, so also he was the most arrogant of conquerors. And this alone seems to have wrought his downfal.

"*Which home*, with all its charities, *inspires.*"]—In allusion to that well-known passage in Tully,—"*Chari sunt parentes, liberi, &c. sed patria sola omnium harum rerum charitatem amplectitur.*" The quotation is from memory, and may not be quite accurate.

"*Then Moskwa our* Thermopylæ *should be.*"]—The straits of Thermopylæ, rendered illustrious and interesting to posterity, by the self-devotion of Leonidas and his band of heroes. There can be little doubt, but the self-devotion of that once-splendid city, Moscow, will be equally famous with *ages yet unborn.*

"*To where Kalouga's woody heights aspire.*"]—Kalouga is situated to the south-west of Moscow.

"*Nor think, till Moscow fall, the war begun.*"]—The Russian Generals told the French, who represented to them that there had been bloodshed enough, that they did not consider the war fairly begun, till after the fall of Moscow.

The Hettman Platoff's Speech.—Of all the Russian warriors, the Hettman seems the most interesting. The lineaments which the Author has given to his character, are those with which his own mind has been forcibly impressed, by a contemplation thereof, in the abstract. He appears a sort of Ajax, among his comrades in arms; and has no idea of beating the enemy any other way than by fair hard fighting. Moreover, there is a generosity and frankness, and withal a disinterestedness about him, which very much prepossesses one in his favour. He is an independent sovereign; yet fighting the battle of the nation, to which he is attached, with as much zeal and cordiality as if it were his own. He cannot bear the thought of turning his back upon the foe, lest he should give him a pretence for claiming a victory. From all accounts, Platoff must be thought one of the most truly martial characters of the day. It is worthy of remark, that this chieftain has never been unhandsomely spoken of in the French Bulletins. Probably, a hope was cherished by the Great Napoleon, that he might be able, when he got into the heart of Russia, to seduce him from his allegiance, or rather engagements—to that power; and that, by abstaining from the abuse which he generally heaps upon such adversaries as are very formidable to him, he would stand a fairer chance of car-

rying his point. Or perhaps it was a different sort of policy, which dictated this forbearance; and the Great Gaul was actually afraid, that he himself might, through the vicissitudes of war, fall into the Hettman's power; and therefore thought it advisable not to offer him any personal offence.

"*From vales, where Tanais winds his mazy course.*"]—The Cossacs inhabit partly the banks of the Don, anciently called the Tanais; partly the Uralian mountains; and partly the islands and banks of the Borysthenes. As these are the most interesting warriors of the day, it is presumed, that the following brief view of their history may be acceptable to most readers. The name implies irregular troops of horse. These people are divided into European and Asiatic Cossacs. The first consist of the Zaporag, who dwell below the cataracts of the Dnieper; the lower and upper Cossacks; the Bielgorod Cossacs; and part of the Don Cossacs. The Asiatic Cossacs consist of the residue of the Don Cossacs; the Yaick Cossacs, and the Western Calmucs; who retiring from those who inhabited the south borders of Siberia, under Yackuki Can, settled upon the Volga, and are dependent upon Russia. The Cossacs formerly dwelt upon Mount Cau-

casus, in the place now called Cabardy; and were reduced under the Russian dominion, in the year 1021. During the 16th century, the Zaporag fixed their habitation on the spacious plains that stretch along the banks of the Dnieper. The Poles, to protect themselves from the ravages of the Tartars, entered into an alliance with them, and agreed to pay them a subsidy; in return for which, they engaged to keep on foot a body of troops, to protect the Polish frontier from the ravages of their rude neighbours. With a view to bind them more strongly, the Poles gave them the country between the Dnieper and Niester, which the Cossacs applied themselves to cultivate, with great diligence; so that, in a short time, it was interspersed with many handsome villages. In order to resist the Turks, they possest themselves of the islands of the Dnieper, and there fixed their magazines. The Hettman was not, during this alliance, subordinate to the Field-Marshall of Poland, but acted in concert with him, as an ally. The Poles became at last envious of this enterprising and industrious race of men, seeing the vast improvement which they had been able to make, in the country given up to them; and actually made an attempt to bring them under subjection. The Cossacs prevailed against their oppressors, and not

only preserved their old immunities, but also obtained new privileges. The result of all was, that they put themselves under the protection of Russia; and as their former country was, in a great measure, laid waste, in their contest for independence, they settled in the Ukraine; stipulating, however, that no alteration should be made in their constitution. In the war between Charles XII. and the Czar Peter I. they went over to the former monarch; for which disloyalty the Czar took ample vengeance, after the battle of Pultowa put them again in his power.

" *With eagles far advanced,*" &c.]—It is asserted as a positive fact, that the boasted eagles of the French legions are seldom to be met with, in the hottest part of an engagement; so that whenever these trophies are taken from them, they are most unequivocal proofs of the complete discomfiture of the enemy. Unlike the Roman eagles, which were always displayed where the danger was the greatest. Whence the remark, " Where the eagle is, there is the carnage." And whence, probably, our blessed Saviour's observation; " Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." It is certainly being true to the character of the Hettman Platoff, to put this remark

into his mouth; for it is observed by Sir Robert Wilson, that the Cossacs set a higher value upon those trophies of war, and badges of victory, than upon things of real intrinsic worth. So that it was natural enough for the Hettman to complain, that the French eagles were studiously kept out of harm's way. It is stated, that, on an occasion, when the late Queen of Prussia was desirous of shewing this gallant chieftain the highest possible mark of gratitude and regard, and left it to himself to point out, in what shape he would be pleased to accept such tokens, he barely requested to be presented with a plume of feathers, which was worn by her Majesty; remarking, that nothing in the world could gratify him more, than to see it worn by his own lady.

"*Still as a* summer's noon *attention gain.*"]—In allusion to that most beautiful idea in Paradise Lost—

"*Drew audience and attention still as night,*
Or summer's noon-tide air, *while thus he spoke.*"

"*Thus shall Napoleon fail of one pretence,*" *&c.*]—This single fact of the Russians sleeping upon the field of battle, disproves, beyond all manner of doubt, the

allegations of the French Bulletins, that the Russian army was routed; "and that it fought no longer for victory, but for safety." Possibly the scene of action,—the theatre of battle,—was so extensive, that complete rout might have taken place in one quarter, and yet in another, the defensive army might have stood its ground, and foiled all the efforts of the furious and persevering assailants. But circumstances, hereafter to be mentioned, will most clearly evince, that (setting aside the Russians' claim to victory, and leaving their statement of facts entirely out of the question) the French army was very far indeed from obtaining any thing like a complete victory. It may be proper to mention in this place, that the French head-quarters remained (by their own admission) a day or two after the battle of Borodino, at the place where they had been, antecedent to it. A fact which proves that no great advantage was taken of this overthrow of the Russians, if such it really was. And this is not at all, à la Buonaparte;—who has always been more remarkable for improving success, than even for obtaining it.

"*The sun had risen on the earth.*"]—This is a scriptural expression. And the Author is (he will not say proud; it would be unbecoming on the occasion,)

but he is grateful to acknowledge the obligation. How much superior are those simple modes of marking the time of the day, or the season of the year, to the elaborate descriptions of nature, which we, now-a-days, so frequently meet with, in the works of the most popular writers?—The Author does not mean to commend himself. Let that be clearly understood. He merely avails himself of the opportunity, thus offered, to avow himself an advocate for antient classical simplicity, in preference to the turgid over-wrought *picturesque*, of certain popular ballad-mongers of the day.—"*The sun had risen on the earth;*" these words convey to the mind of every man who enjoys the use of his senses, all the ideas which *cheerful morn* excites. And to be diffuse in describing that which is sufficiently described, by a single word, is certainly, not only to outrage good taste, but also to offer an affront to the understanding of readers. Most men have observed the resplendent beauties of a fine morning;—the mellow tints of an evening. And to recal to their minds the imagery which has often given them the most exquisite delight, it is sufficient to mention some one of the most prominent features of the picture.—"*The sun had risen on the earth,*"—recals to the mind of every such one, all the beauties of a lovely morning; and presents him

with a finer picture of it, than can be drawn by the most masterly pencil.

" *'Twas past meridian's blaze, and* Sirian *heat.*"]—It was the month of September; consequently during the dog-days.

" *They run, they fly; the fugitives are off!*"]—It may very fairly be presumed, that such were the emotions of Napoleon, when he was apprized that the Russians were retiring from the field of battle, after having remained masters of it all night, and till the middle of next day. Indeed, some accounts say, till the evening of next day. And it is hoped that even the *admirers* of the modern Attila, will not think much violence done to the character of their idol, by this trait thereof. It will scarcely be doubted, but he must himself have been under the necessity of making a retrograde movement, or, at any rate, remaining in his then position, till reinforcements should arrive, had not the Russians relieved him from this embarrassment, by the step they took. Embarrassment truly: for what possible colour could he have given to any claim of victory, at the battle of Moskwa, had the Russians still maintained their ground, and he himself

remained stationary for several days? And what would have been his situation, if, after so great a battle, he should have failed of a pretence for claiming the victory? It is therefore quite consistent with verisimilitude, to represent Buonaparte as betraying such emotions. For, with all his craft and self-command, he must be allowed to be incapable of suppressing emotions of exultation, and of pride. It was remarked by Mr. Fox, "that he had less indirectness about him than any other statesman he ever met with." That is to say, when he was enlarging upon his extent of power and dominion, and meditating future exploits, and (rendered vain by past successes) quite confident as to future results, he was unable to keep within his own breast the projects which engaged his thoughts, and very frankly told every one his views, in regard to Turkey and other countries, which he had it in contemplation to *regenerate*. This, probably, it was, wherein consisted his indirectness. And this it was, in which he might appear even to Lord Whitworth, a very open and communicative sort of statesman, when he laid before his Lordship the map of Europe; and, for the space of four hours, expatiated upon his projects; at least hinted, what he seemed to himself to have it in his power to achieve. Yet, with all this indirectness,

it is presumed, Lord Whitworth thought him a very deep designing villain.

"*Revenge, the darling passion of his mind.*"]—This is no poetical figment. It is upon record; an historical fact. "At the conferences at Tilsit, Buonaparte declared that he loved vengeance; that it was a passion, a sentiment—congenial to his heart." Vid. Sir Robert Wilson's Brief Remarks. This assuredly was being sufficiently communicative, and shewing his indirectness with a vengeance. It is to be hoped that it was no circumstance of this kind, which prepossessed our distinguished statesman and *philanthropist* so much, in favour of the openness, and plain-dealing of this spoiled child of fortune. But perhaps, in this instance, Napoleon gave a worse account of himself, than he really deserved; and was in reality so far from being frank and candid in this declaration, that the real drift of it was, by representing himself as a ferocious and insatiable monster, to deter the Emperor Alexander from offering him any affront hereafter. For it is certainly a most remarkable trait in Buonaparte's character, that he has habituated himself to look upon all mankind as cowards or sensualists; and to consider every man a slave, either to fear or selfishness; which are indeed very near akin to each other. This arrogant assump-

tion, so insulting to a race of reasonable creatures, has at last plunged himself in disaster and humiliation. For had he not still cherished his darling notion, that Alexander would at length be frightened into a compliance with his wishes, it is inconceivable, why he should have loitered amid the ruins of Moscow so long as he did.

"*Which hoarding up displeasure and dislike.*"]—"*Odia in longum jaciens, quæ reconderet, auctaque repromeret.*" This sentence, so familiar, from the circumstance of its having been applied by Junius, to a Duke of Bedford, is perhaps more applicable to Buonaparte, than it was even to the sanguinary tyrant, whom that great judge of human nature (Tacitus) originally described by it.

"*Aloud the order of the day was read.*"]—The French Bulletins did not announce any order of the day on that occasion. But it is quite consistent with verisimilitude; for every one who knows any thing at all of military matters, has not to learn that an order of the day is given out almost daily. Nothing of any moment, certainly, occurs, without calling forth something of the kind. And it is quite unquestionable, that an order of the day must have been promulged on the

occasion now before us. This order has for its model, the one which, (according to the French Bulletin,) was read aloud to the French army, before the battle of Borodino. The original (as an excellent specimen of Buonaparte's composition, and no bad transcript of his mind) is here subjoined:—"Soldiers! behold the field of battle you have so much desired. Henceforth victory depends on you. It is necessary to us. It will give us plenty; good quarters for the winter, and a speedy return to our country. Behave yourselves as you did at Austerlitz, at Friedland, at Vitepsk; and that the latest posterity may speak of your conduct this day, with pride; that it may say of you, "He was at that great battle under the walls of Moscow."—"This is the sun of Austerlitz," said the Emperor; as it occurs in the same Bulletin.

"*Such feelings now his ravisht bosom swell.*"]—The Author must confess, that he has not been able to contemplate the character of Buonaparte, and, at the same time, dismiss from his mind that of Milton's Satan. It is not therefore surprizing, if he has fallen into some of that great Poet's ideas. There seems no little resemblance, in the respective situations and circumstances of the two chieftains; of one, after he had

extricated himself from the burning lake, and was overjoyed to find himself still the commander of a vast and potent army; of the other, when, to his infinite surprize and delight, he witnessed the retreat of that army, before which he had apprehended, that he should be obliged to betake himself to flight. And therefore, in the excess of his transport, and the overflowings of his pride and ungodliness, he may be imagined, like Satan, to "have hurled defiance towards the vault of Heaven."

"*Swift as an arrow from the Parthian's bow.*"]—

Miles sagittas, et celerem fugam,
Parthi perhorrescit.

HOR. *Carm. Lib. II.*

"*Like a Spartan wedge.*"]—The Spartan wedge and Macedonian phalanx are terms familiar to all classical scholars.

"*Where Moskwa meets Neglina's confluent wave.*"]—Moscow is situated on a spacious plain, at the conflux of the rivers Moskwa and Neglina. It was anciently denominated Kioff; and was then a place of minor importance. Pleased with the situation at the con-

flux of two rivers, and bordered on every side with a vast extent of fertile plain; George, the son of Vladimir Monomaka, selected it for the site of a new capital, which he called Moscow; from the larger of the two confluent rivers on which it was situated.

"*He views the gilded domes and glittering spires.*"]—Moscow is said to have been the largest town in Europe. Its circumference not less than twenty-six English miles. What particularly struck the eye of the astonished beholder, who viewed this immensely extended city, was its numerous churches. These are said to have amounted to upwards of a thousand. They were built in a peculiar style of architecture; some with domes of copper; others of tin, gilt, or painted green, azure, and blue. This is a circumstance necessary to be borne in mind, in order to perceive the propriety of the description of this splendid place, as it is represented, in a subsequent passage of the Poem, to have been exhibited to the eye of Napoleon.

"*On Sparrow mount,*" &c.]—It was asserted in the French Bulletin at the time, that the Russian General had conceived the design of attempting to defend Moscow by the works, which were thrown up here.

But it is evident, that they had no other view, than the one here specified.

"*And where Kalouga's stream,*" &c.]—Kalouga is a river which is tributary to the Oka, which latter is tributary to the mighty Volga. Kalouga is also the name of a town, situated in the neighbourhood of the river from whence it is denominated. It is to the south-west of Moscow, and in the most fertile part of the Russian dominions. It seems to have been selected by the Russian General, as his point of retreat, not only that he might have it in his power to prevent the incursions of the invaders into a district, from whence they might have derived abundant supplies of provisions; but also, as a convenient point of rendezvous, for the various reinforcements that were crowding to his standard.

"*And leave Napoleon's pride an empty boast.*"]—It is inconceivable how Buonaparte could have the effrontery to boast of a decisive victory over the Russians, at Borodino, when it comes out, how little advantage he derived from it. He must, of course, have been anxious to possess himself of Moscow, in order to secure the winter quarters, which he had told his

army, a victory was necessary to them, in order that they might obtain. But when we find that he was not able to reach the "*haven* where he would be," before this beaten army (although the theatre of his victory was twenty-five leagues from the desired spot, and therefore an opportunity was afforded him of breaking through, or outflanking the fugitives); nay more, when we find that it took his army, *flushed* with *victory*, and eager in pursuit, seven days to march this trifling distance; when the acquisition, by their own acknowledgment, was so truly desirable to them: and after all, when it appears that they were not able, during that leisurely advance, to obtain the least advantage over the retreating army, one cannot but smile at the arrogancy, which could set up a claim to a complete victory, on the part of the French, at the battle of Borodino.

NOTES TO CANTO II.

"*THE Kremlin's gilded spires and gilded globes.*"]—The Kremlin, two miles in circumference, is situated in the centre of Moscow, and surrounded by high walls of brick and stone. It contains the ancient palace of the Czars, which is situated at the extremity thereof. The top is thickly set with numerous little gilded spires and globes.

"*Like Prussia's Queen amid the clash of arms.*"]—Buonaparte took a pleasure in insulting this unfortunate lady, in her life-time. Amid the Prussian preparations for the great battle, which decided the fate of that monarchy, when it was publicly announced, that the Queen of Prussia was present with her own regiment, he remarked, with a very contemptuous sort of sneer, "There is a handsome Queen with the army." It is therefore sufficiently consistent with his profligate and insolent character, to suppose him capable

of using such language as, in this place, is put into his mouth.

" *Gave signal that the* conqueror of the world."]—As this is a title of distinction, which has been applied to Napoleon, over and over again, in the British House of Commons *(proh pudor & mores!* for how could the world be said to be conquered, when the British nation was *comparatively* greater than it had been at any former period?) yet as this pre-eminent distinction has been conceded to the tyrant, in so august an assembly, and that, too, seriously and deliberately, the Author thinks that he may, at least, be allowed to pay him the same mark of respect, *in derision.*

" *Like Pella's madman, or Judea's rod.*"]—Alexander the Great was born at Pella, a city of Macedonia, whence he is called, by Juvenal, " Pellæo Juveni." By Judea's rod is meant Herod, who is alluded to in a foregoing verse, whose shocking catastrophe is well known to every reader of the Evangelists.

" *And even* apostate *France began to think.*"]—No set of people, perhaps, are more subject to superstitious

horror, in awful and trying situations, than those who have openly and wantonly profaned religion, and pretended to be entirely free from its hopes and its fears. Possibly the cool, sedate, and philosophical free-thinker may be an exception; but then, it is not to be supposed, that such a one has ever offered violence to religion,—rude and wanton violence,—and pretended to treat the matter with contemptuous indifference: although he may (from a too open and candid disposition) have expressed his want of conviction on the subject. It cannot be conceived that such a man as Hume was a slave to any such fears; much less is it to be presumed of Spinosa, who is represented as having been the most amiable of human beings. But the remark applies to all scoffers, and open violators of God's mysteries; and therefore must be admitted to be entirely applicable to the French army. The Author will not enter into the argument whether Buonaparte is the antichrist, or whether the French nation is to be accounted the antichrist, or who, or what, is, or is not, the antichrist (as he thinks it even worse than vain babbling); but he will maintain, that the term Apostate applies to *the Great Nation*, in its full force and extent of meaning.

" *But chief the treasury, where the effulgence bright.*"] In that part of the Kremlin, called the Treasury (according to the accounts of travellers who have visited Moscovy) are deposited the crown, jewels, and royal robes, used at coronations.

" *Will plume itself on these barbaric spoils.*"]—The true classical signification of the word Barbaric, is *foreign*, or *outlandish*, and perhaps it still maintains its original import. But as the word Barbarous (for which it may be mistaken) is of so very different an acceptation in modern speech, it is necessary for the English reader to be informed, in what sense the word is here meant to be taken. Milton, somewhere in Paradise Lost, uses the phrase, " *barbaric gold*," which is, indeed, truly elegant and classical.

" *St. Michael's holy pile he visits next.*"]—The Cathedral of St. Michael's, situated in the Kremlin, contains the tombs of the Russian sovereigns. The bodies are not interred in vaults, but in raised sepulchres. The most ancient are covered with red cloth; others with red velvet; and that of Peter I. with gold and silver fringe, and ermine.—*Travels in Russia.*

"*Announced the banquet in Great Peter's Hall.*"]—The apartments in the Kremlin are, in general, said to be exceedingly small, with the exception of one single large room, where the ancient Czars used to give audience to foreign ambassadors. This has a vaulted roof, which is supported by a huge central pillar of stone.

"*A couch, with purple canopy o'erspread.*"]—It is to be understood, that the Czar Peter the Great was born in this palace. And Buonaparte is to be supposed to have been lodged in that very room, in which the Czar first saw light.

"*There Montebello, bleeding fast to death.*"]—Marshal Lasnes, Duke of Montebello, who was mortally wounded in the battle of Aspern and Essling, is said to have desired to see the Emperor Napoleon, when he was on the point of death. The Emperor complied with his wishes, and paid a visit to the dying warrior; who seized fast hold of his hand, and, while he squeezed it with all the warmth and eagerness of friendship, implored him to think of his latter end; and endeavoured to make him understand, how much more happily he could have met his fate, had he not

been cut off thus prematurely, and had been allowed time for repentance. Napoleon is said to have been so little satisfied with his admonition (although he might have been expected to be a little humbled by his recent disaster), that he burst away from him, in the most abrupt and contemptuous manner. Such outrages against humanity as these, are very apt to rise up in judgement against a man in his dreams. They infest his pillow, though he may be armed against their stings, when he is awake, and master of his faculties; and therefore it is quite consistent with verisimilitude, that *such a man* should have been troubled with *such a dream.*

> " *And now kind Fancy to relieve him takes*
> " *The reasoning power.*"]—

It is very true, that reason is oft-times awake, when the body is asleep. Instances have been known (so well authenticated, that there could be no doubt about them) of men composing very excellent Latin verses in their sleep; which they had treasured up in their mind, and could repeat in the morning. And it is a well-known fact, that men (particularly of a hypochondriac cast, and who are very subject to dreams)

will acquire the habit of reasoning with themselves in their sleep. Such are apt to clothe futurity in much more gloomy colours, than existing circumstances warrant; and the consequence is, that, in their sleep, they are frequently troubled with frightful dreams, calculated almost to drive them to distraction. And because these are of very frequent occurrence (renewing their visit indeed almost as often as the wind changes to the east, if not, as often as it changes at all), they at length find out the way (habitually, it should seem) of pacifying themselves, by calling in reason to their aid. They persuade themselves, in their sleep, that it is all nothing but a dream, and that they will awake in the morning, and find themselves in the situation and circumstances, of which they so much deplored the loss. One might appeal to all melancholic and hypochondriac subjects, for the truth of this remark.

" *What dost thou here in this my natal room?*"].—It has already been remarked, that Buonaparte is to be supposed to have been lodged in the room in which Peter the First was born. And it is here to be understood, that his unwelcome visitor is the visionary Czar.

" *Joachim, from his chamber rushing down.*"—Joachim Napoleon (Murat), King of Naples, and *ci-devant* Grand Duke of Berg.

" *A vast expanse of undulating flame.*"]—" The fire spread with astonishing rapidity: it was an ocean of flame."—17*th Bulletin of the French Grand Army.*

" *Though Magdeburg stern Tilly's vengeance felt.*"]—In the days of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, and in the course of the wars which were waged between him and the Emperor of Germany, the Imperial General, Count Tilly, after having been baffled in various attempts upon the city of Magdeburg, at length became so enraged, that he determined to sacrifice the town, and every soul that it contained, to his insatiable and hellish revenge. When, at last, this unfortunate city could no longer hold out, and there was no prospect of succour, the garrison proposed to capitulate; but they were made to understand, that they must surrender at discretion. However hard the conditions, they were obliged to comply, expecting, no doubt, that their submission would save the town. The sanguinary General immediately took possession of the place; and while he still completely surrounded

it with his troops, set fire to it in various places; and gave orders, that any one, who attempted to escape from the flames, should be put to instant death, without distinction of age or sex. And so completely did he exterminate the Magdeburgians, that when Gustavus Adolphus, deeply afflicted at the dreadful calamity which had thus befallen their city, offered a considerable sum of money for every inhabitant of the place, who could be produced alive, scarcely one was to be found.

" *Forthwith the city's rural grace appears.*"]—The reader must bear in mind, that the whole space within the vast circumference of Moscow, was not occupied by streets and houses; but woods and fields were every where interspersed. So that one part had all the tranquil charms of rural scenery; while another presented the bustle of an immense and populous city. The effect of the fire, upon the wood and water, must indeed have been inconceivably beautiful.

" *The work of slaughter at Madrid.*"]—Murat's feats, at Madrid, are too fresh in every one's recollection to need to be enumerated.

" *As Xerxes lashed the Hellespont.*"]—When Xerxes found that the bridge of boats, which he had made across the Hellespont, to transport his army out of Asia into Europe, had, one night, been destroyed, by the *uncivil* fury of the winds and waves, he very *majestically* ordered a certain number of lashes to be inflicted upon the turbulent element, to teach it better manners for the future.

" *Now, by myself, and all the powers, I swear.*"]—From the accounts which are given of Buonaparte's ungovernable anger and violent paroxysms of rage, it is quite probable, that he would confirm such a threat, on such an occasion, with a blasphemous oath. And because, as St. Paul says of the Almighty (with reverence I make the allusion), " he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." In his own estimation of himself, there can be little doubt, but he was highest in the scale of *intelligent powers*, that he acknowledged.

" *Here Prince Bagration finds the wished relief.*"]—This illustrious warrior, the most distinguished of all the Russian Generals, died of the wound which he

had received at the battle of Borodino, shortly after the retreat to the Kalouga. There is consequently no anachronism, nor any thing inconsistent, in representing his death on this wise. And it is presumed, there is a felicity, in the combination of circumstances, that would even justify a trifling deviation from the line of ascertained truth, and authenticated fact, even if such a variance could be proved. But the Author takes upon him to say, that there are no known facts at all at variance, with this account of the matter.

> " *Farewell, proud city, thou and I have seen,*
> " *A happier day (he cries), and we have been.*"

In allusion to the Virgilian expression, " fuit Illium, & ingens—Gloria Teucrorum," which, it is to be understood, was spoken (as here) when Troy was expiring; and not after it had actually expired.

NOTES TO CANTO III.

"*TWICE seven vicissitudes of day and night.*"]—Poetry may assuredly be allowed to speak in round numbers. There might be the interval of a few days more between the first occupation of Moscow by the French, and the mission of Count Lauriston, to the Russian head-quarters. The French Bulletin states, that they entered Moscow on the 14th September. And a subsequent Bulletin, that on the 5th October, Count Lauriston was to go on his mission. But some time must be allowed between the day when the measure was resolved on, and that, on which it was put in execution. And we may reasonably enough suppose, that, as Buonaparte's flag of truce reached the head-quarters of the enemy about the 5th October, he must have resolved upon the measure, some fortnight or so after Moscow was destroyed. For the distance between Moscow and Kalouga is considerable; not to speak of the impediments that the messenger would

have to encounter, at the different posts of an enemy, who wished so little to see him.

> "*One while pretends*, &c.—
> "*That Moscow's magazines were full.*"]—

"We found in it considerable resources of every kind." —*French Bulletin (19th).*

Again:—"The resources which the army would have found, are consequently much diminished; however, we have collected, and are still collecting, a number of necessaries. All the cellars are untouched by the fire; and the inhabitants, during the last twenty-four hours, have saved many things."—(*20th Bulletin.*)

Again:—"The fires subsided on the 19th and 20th. Three-quarters of the city are burned; not above a quarter of the houses remain.—(*21st Bulletin.*) But afterwards, when his engineers take a sketch and survey of the city, "it results, that there has not been saved of the town but one-tenth part; nine-tenths exist no more."—(*24th Bulletin.*)—That is to say, when flight was determined on, it was necessary to contradict the former glosses, and to make it appear, that the reason for removing was, because Moscow was not a fit place to winter in.

"*Repeat them all, and double their amount.*"—This order, put into the mouth of Buonaparte, is justified by his intercepted letter to the Duke of Bassano, dated Moscow, October 16th, 1812. In this letter Napoleon says, "I not only desire that reinforcements be sent to me, but I also wish that their amount may be exaggerated, and that these sovereigns do order to be inserted in their Gazettes, not only the great number of troops which they send off, but that also they double the number in their statements."

"*From Moscow to the Pokhra, where extends.*"]—"As soon as the position of the Russians was ascertained, a considerable portion of the army under Murat, occupied the intermediate country between Moscow and the Pokhra.—*Lord Cathcart's Dispatch, Nov. 11th.*

"*The Zaporag, averse to female smiles.*"]—The Cossacs thus denominated (who dwell along the banks of the Borysthenes, and occupy the islands of that river), are said to spend their youth without being permitted to have any intercourse with the females. The male children are removed from the care of their mothers at a very early age, and are brought up altogether in

the camp. The females live on islands by themselves, and only see their husbands in time of peace; and then, only occasionally. They never cohabit; but are content to meet when convenience permits. What may not be expected from a race of warriors, who have thus no passion to gratify, but the love of glory,—who are enslaved by no habits calculated to unnerve their strength, nor make them fretful and uneasy, and anxious after home, when the public service requires them abroad?

"*Sends forth, equipped with* dolikoskian *spears.*"]—"*Dolikoskion engkos*" is an expression of most frequent occurrence in Homer; as every one, who has read the Prince of Poets, in the original language, can testify. The word means "casting a long shade," and must therefore be allowed to be most applicable to the spear of the Cossacs, which (according to Sir Robert Wilson) "projects above six feet beyond the horses' heads."

"*And Volga's* iron squadrons *thunder down.*"]—

On Volga's banks let iron squadrons shine,
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine.

POPE.

"*Beyond the Vistula when you are driven.*"]—This is reported to have been one of the smart things, which Prince Kutusoff said to Count Lauriston, on this occasion.

"*You see where Naples, on the Nara's banks.*"]—"The King of Naples has his advanced guard on the Nara, in presence of the enemy, who is occupied in reorganizing his army, by completing it with the militia."—*24th Bulletin.*

"*Beyond Veukovo see his horse advance.*"]—The advanced guard of cavalry, placed in advance of Veukovo, were surprised by a horde of Cossacs. They were in the camp before they could mount on horseback.—*25th Bulletin.*

"*Their guns,* impediments, &c."]—*Impedimenta* is the word which is invariably used by Cæsar, and other Latin historians, for baggage. And as this latter is so very unpoetical (not to say, so very low) a word, the Author urges this plea for using *impediments* in a new, but assuredly, not unclassical sense.

Licuit semper que licebit
Signatum presente nota producere nummum.

HOR. *Ars Poetica.*

"*Each spear-man bears a cuirass, plume, and casque.*"] Sir Robert Wilson says, that the Cossacs, in the battle of Eylau, after they had charged the French cuirassiers, overthrown them, and slain a great number, immediately returned from the scene of their bloody work, wearing the cuirasses, which they had stripped from their slaughtered foes. How like their neighbours (perhaps I might say, ancestors) of old, in the fields of Troy! It is presumed from this example, that such is their usual practice. And it is upon this presumption, that the Author has given such a representation of their behaviour, on this occasion.

"*Perhaps to Toula you shall shape your course.*"]—This speech, which is here put into the mouth of Napoleon, is founded chiefly on that most unaccountable production, the twenty-fifth French Bulletin. "Some think the Emperor will march upon Toula and Kalouga, to pass the winter in those provinces, and occupy Moscow, by a garrison in the Kremlin."

"Others suppose the Emperor will blow up the Kremlin, and burn the public establishments which remain; and that he will approach within a hundred leagues of Poland, to establish his winter quarters in a

friendly country, and to receive every thing which exists in the magazines of Dantzic," &c.—*Bulletin twenty-fifth.*—This composition appeared strange enough, even before we knew for certain, that the Bulletins of the Grand Army were written by Buonaparte himself: for it was to be presumed, that if they were written by any one else, such official person, in a dispatch to the domestic government, would have confined himself to the mention of positive facts and arrangements, so far as he was made acquainted therewith, by his master; and by no means have descended to a statement of rumours, and vague opinions, respecting their own movements. But what are we to think of the matter now, after we have been assured, that the author of the Bulletins was no other than Buonaparte himself? When he penned such a dispatch as this, he must, unquestionably, have been in a state of mind bordering either upon distraction or fatuity. There is no other solution of the problem.

" *And occupy the Don's* detested *source.*"]—It is presumed, that the river of the Cossacs was far from being a pleasant sound in his ears, or connected with pleasant recollections, in his mind.

"*Moscow now has lost its rank.*"]—This reason for quitting that post was not only assigned in the Bulletin of the day; but has been since repeated, by Napoleon, in his speech to the senate.

"*Yelling Cossacs.*"]—"When the Cossacs charge *en masse* (but without systematic formation) they altogether raise a yell, more frightful than that of the Canadian savages."—*Sir Robert Wilson's Brief Remarks.*

FINIS.

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